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# **Editor's Letter**



# The Greatest Golf Story Never Told

IS record doesn't compare to five British Opens or 331 weeks at world No.1, but Clyde Pearce could well be the greatest Australian golf story you've never read ... until now.

As Australia prepares for April 25's 100-year Anniversary Celebrations of the Gallipoli landings, AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST'S Geoff Armstrong will pause to reflect on a mission he undertook with great pride and diligence – uncovering the courageous life of the first native-born winner of the Australian Open.

It's a story that has been years in the making. Armstrong, a renowned author and sports historian, began to take an interest in prominent Australian sportsmen who served in World War I when he worked with the great lock forward Wayne Pearce (no relation to Clyde) compiling a rugby league anthology in the early 1990s. That book included a letter from the Western Front written by the Glebe and Australian second-rower Bert Gray. Armstrong did something similar in a rugby union book with Gordon Bray, which included a number of letters written by outstanding footballers from the battlefields. In more recent times, he has written about Bob Tidyman, the young Australian rugby league centre who was killed at Flers, France, in 1916, 'Tibby' Cotter, the great fast bowler who died during the Battle of Beersheba in 1917, and Ted Larkin, an Australian rugby hooker, first full-time secretary of the NSW Rugby League and Labor MP in the NSW Parliament who fell during the Gallipoli landing. Larkin might have been a future Prime Minister.

"It is astonishing how many fine sportsmen and sporting identities enlisted for the Great War," says Armstrong. "Too many didn't come home."

Of all those great stories, however, none intrigued Armstrong more than that of Lieutenant Clyde Pearce. He was just 29 when he died during the Battle of Messines in 1917. Nine years earlier, at The Australian Golf Club, Pearce had become the first Australian-born winner of the national Open. Pearce's freakish ability to beat the competition without the time or need for practice quickly became the stuff of legend.

Last November, Armstrong watched another prodigious young talent, Jordan Spieth, win his Australian Open at the same course. It triggered his historian senses, and he decided he wanted to learn as much as he could about Pearce: how good was he ... the circumstances around his death ... and what might have been?

"One of the first things I learned was that Clyde's final round (a course record-equalling 75) in 1908 was, in its own way, just as impressive as Spieth's 106 years later," says Armstrong. "I liked the coincidences – both men were prodigies; same course, same tournament ... Spieth may go on to become one of golf's great champions. Fate meant Clyde Pearce never had that chance."

Sadly, apart from a wellresearched story by golf historians, John Scarth and Greg Ramsay, that appeared in the British Golf Collectors' Society's Through The Green magazine in September 2009, there has been little published about Pearce over the past 100 years. His move to Western Australia in 1912 helps explain why he escaped the headlines. The fact he was originally from Tasmania only adds to his mainland obscurity. And, unlike other greats of the sport, Pearce doesn't have a large bank of big tournament

wins because his career in the game was all but over before he turned 24.

The Australasian Golf Museum at Bothwell, Tasmania, celebrates the careers of the Apple Isle's greatest players, Pearce among them. The Pearce family's former home, Narryna, at Battery Point, Hobart, is now the Narryna Heritage Museum. Pearce is at least remembered in plaques located at the St Peter's Church at Sandy Bay, the Soldiers Memorial Avenue in Hobart, the 10th Light Horse Memorial at Kings Park, Perth, the Australian War Memorial and at the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres, Belgium.

When Armstrong contacted members of the Pearce family he learned they have Clyde's Australian Open trophy – a silver soup tureen [see page 107], suitably inscribed. They were extremely grateful for any information he could give them.

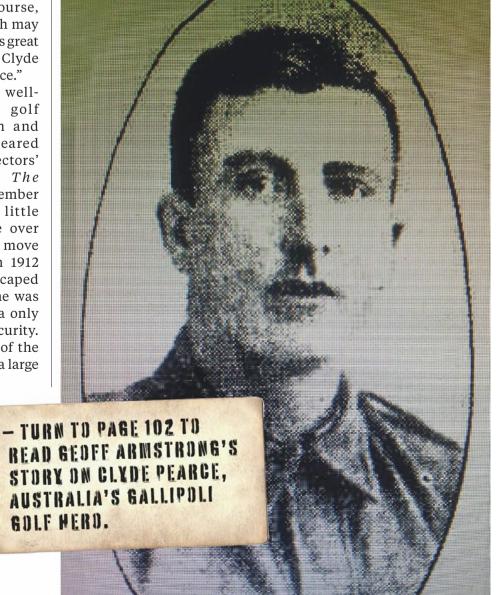
"The Red Cross' 'wounded and missing' files and letters posted back to Clyde's father tells the story of his death," says Armstrong. "Consequently, we can finally create an accurate

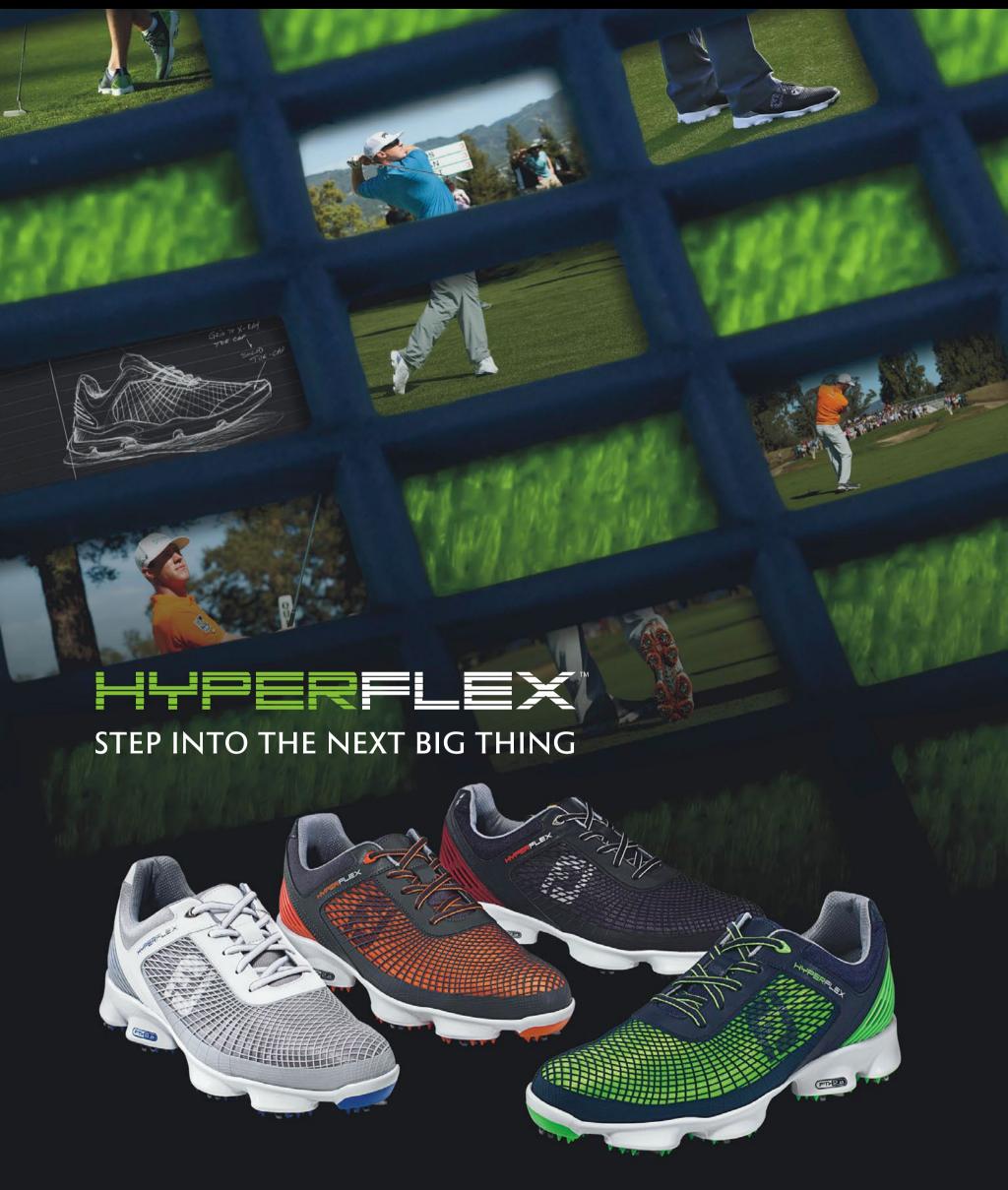
picture of Clyde's career in golf and his war service."

Of course, it is impossible to definitively compare the great players of different eras, but there is little doubt Pearce should be rated as one of the most naturally gifted golfers Australia has ever produced. His ultimate sacrifice makes him arguably Australian golf's greatest hero.

It is Armstrong's hope that, with the Anzac Centenary being celebrated this year, Clyde Pearce's service to golf and country can be duly recognised by the game he briefly dominated – perhaps at this year's Australian Open, the very place where Pearce enjoyed his greatest sporting triumph.

During his research, Armstrong contacted Adrian Howard, who has done much to revive Hobart's Soldiers Memorial Avenue, which honours Tasmania's fallen soldiers from the Great War. A tree was planted for each of the men who died. Pearce's tree, like his short but legendary golf career, is flourishing. *Lest We Forget*.





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# **Your Say**

#### • LETTER OF THE MONTH

# **Committees too quick** to penalise slow play

HE players in my group were recently penalised under Rule 6-7 for undue delay, slow play. My club has thus set a guideline that competition rounds should be finished in four hours, which is reasonable.

At the time of tee off, the assigned group in front of us did not show and there was an appreciable gap between my group and the group in front. We tried various methods to catch them but weren't successful. We did, however, complete the round within the time frame stipulated by our local guideline under Rule 6-7.

We were penalised for not keeping up with the group in front because the group ahead of us finished in a much faster time, further increasing the initial gap between us.

I carry a number of injuries earned from sport, accidents and my career. I am also a high handicapper (29). I'm not the fastest player in any group but the group/s I am part of do make the stipulated time for our rounds. My groups have never been penalised before.

Match committees, I believe, must take into consideration all the reasons that may apply before making a sweeping generalisation of slow play. Keeping up with the group in front is a great idea when all groups are of the same ability and fitness. However, a physical gap is not always the measure of the pace of play. When you show up to play a game, you never know who your partner may be. This is the social part of the game that most people cherish and why I personally choose to keep playing golf.

> Trevor Perry, Eltham, VIC



#### No Second Chance For Bad Boy Lance

I AM a long time subscriber to your magazine but an article on selfconfessed drug cheat, liar and admitted fraudster Lance Armstrong is just too much. I am amazed that the highly regarded US golf writer Guy Yocum would be party to promoting what Armstrong has to say. Perhaps they can interview other fraudsters such as (stockbroker) Bernie Madoff if he ever gets out of jail. It was a very disappointing choice of subject and poor editorial judgement in my opinion.

> Jeff Simpson, Narrabeen, NSW

TO MY horror I see that you dedicated five pages (including contents) to what I can only describe as the most despicable sports person in sporting history. Whilst there have been many cheats exposed across numerous sports, to include this certifiable liar, systematic drug cheat and belligerent defender of his lower than low actions suggests to me that on

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this occasion you have clearly shanked it out of bounds.

Golf is game that prides itself on players adhering to the rules. To headline an article "Lance Armstrong: Why I'll never cheat at golf" might read as a somewhat redeeming feature of the man but many of us will never forget or forgive the years of deception.

There are so many dedicated sports men and women in Australia that could benefit from the exposure that AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST magazine could provide them.

Michael Bloem, via email

Editor's note: AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST'S decision to publish a story on Lance Armstrong and why he'd "never cheat at golf" highlighted to us the universal integrity of our game. One of the worst drug cheats in the history of world sport cannot bring himself to bend the rules of golf and, to us, that indicates other sports view golf as a moral compass upon which they base the idea of character and principle. The bigger picture here is golf inspires participants of other sports to not only become better athletes, but better people.

#### THIS MONTH'S WINNER!

Congratulations Trevor Perry, who wins a Cobra Bio Cell Hybrid, courtesy of Cobra-PUMA Golf.

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# "The braver your second shot is, the easier your third."

#### 4. PLAN YOUR APPROACH

This isn't a bad spot to come in from, except the green runs away from you. Be careful trying to get back to a hole cut on the right. Your ball could easily roll off and end up in the drink.

#### 3. FEELING BOLD?

If you've hit a great drive down the left, you might be able to go for the green (even middle-handicappers can, if they play from the correct tees). The entrance is not over water; it's a bounce-on shot with some risk

### A Par 5 that Turns **Twice**

# Making your way down a double dogleg

RUTH is, most of the par 5s I've designed are double doglegs. Straightaway par 5s aren't as common as you might think. (Even the 18th hole at Pebble Beach is a double dogleg, though both doglegs bend to the left.) To score on these holes, you need a smart strategy and clear thinking.

Let's look at the 18th hole on the Champion Course at Florida's PGA National, which I redesigned in 1989. The course again hosted the US PGA Tour's Honda Classic in February. The first dogleg curves to the left, and the second to the right. There's water all along the right side, but it really doesn't come into play off the tee. There are wetlands on the left if you hit a bad pull or hook it. As you'll see, the braver you are on your second shot, the easier your third will be.

– WITH ROGER SCHIFFMAN

#### 2. PLAY A SMART SECOND

From here, the shorter hitter's option is to get to the green in two more shots: an iron or wood down the fairway, clear of the bunkers on the left, and a short iron in. Smart for any player.

• ON THIS HOLE IN HISTORY

#### Lanny's Killer Pitch

In the 1983 Ryder Cup at PGA National, Lanny Wadkins came to the 18th hole 1 down to Jose Maria Canizares, and we needed half a point for a halve. After two solid shots, Lanny was 65 metres from the hole. His pitch over the gaping right bunker finished tight for a kick-in birdie to win the hole, meaning the US would retain the cup. That was my first captaincy. I was so happy about that shot Lanny hit, I ran out and playfully kissed the divot.

#### 1. GO AHEAD AND SMASH IT

As a designer, I like to give golfers room to drive the ball. If the tee shot is too difficult, no one will be in position for a risk-reward second shot. There are bunkers here, but there's room.





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# Learning the Ropes

Tour players use this practice drill to improve accuracy

WO pieces of rope, each about 8 metres long, and an alignment rod or clubshaft stuck in the ground on your target line. That's all you need to improve your accuracy in several ways. I see this simple practice station on US PGA Tour ranges all the time.

First, it trains you to aim your body and clubface correctly. The rolling terrain, the quality of sunlight, even the way tee boxes are oriented on the course can play tricks on your

eyes. Sometimes you think you're lined up to your target, but you're not. The ropes and alignment rod help get your eyes tracking down a target line instead of looking at an object in the distance, which is how a lot of aiming mistakes are made.

The second way the ropes help is improving your swing path. When you hit iron shots off the turf and take divots between the ropes, you can see whether your club's path was left, right or straight at impact. Then

you can make adjustments to your swing and check it again.

Finally, when the ball is airborne, this practice station helps you see just how much your shots are curving. Are they consistently drawing or fading? Having that awareness will allow you to plan for and use your shot shape to hit your targets more often. You get all this information from 16m of rope and a stick. Not bad.

**Sean Foley** teaches at Orange County National in Florida.









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# "Good chippers turn through. Bad ones flip their hands."



## **Crispy Chips**

### A technique so easy you can do it one-handed

F YOU'RE making poor contact on chip shots – hitting behind the ball or catching it thin – it's probably because you're trying to help the ball into the air. Your hands are too active, and you're hitting up at impact. I'm going to walk you through a chipping technique that will make it easy to pinch the ball crisply off the turf.

**David Leadbetter** is a Golf Digest Teaching Professional.

#### 1. LEAN TO THE TARGET



▶ Take a narrow stance, angle your feet towards the target, and play the ball off the big toe of the back foot. Lean your chest and hands slightly towards the target as you settle over the ball.

### 2. LET YOUR WRISTS HINGE



▶ You don't need a lot of wrist action, but letting your wrists hinge naturally allows you to accelerate the club coming down while leading with the hands – a key to solid contact.

# 3. KEEP YOUR CHEST MOVING



► Even with short shots, it's important to keep your body pivoting forward. Your chest should be turning towards the target even after impact. Feel this by practising chips right hand only.

# 4. FOCUS ON THE IMPACT



Make a smooth swing and literally stare at the clubface as it strikes the ball. Solid contact is vital. Once you get a feel for making a crisp strike, you can shift your focus to the target.



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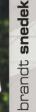




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EFORE the 2014 Ryder Cup, you'd probably never heard of Jamie Donaldson. The man who clinched victory for Europe at Gleneagles had played sporadically on the European Tour, suffering from back problems that were so bad one doctor recommended he retire.

Nevertheless, Donaldson, who was born in Wales and lives in England, persevered in

anonymity. He found a specialist to help him rehab his back with core exercises. Donaldson broke through in 2012, winning the Irish Open at age 36, after 255 starts and finishing 47th on the European Order of Merit. He played well enough on the US PGA Tour as a non-member in 2014 to earn his card for this year.

But the highlight of Donaldson's career came on the 15th hole of his Ryder Cup

singles match against Keegan Bradley last September. When European captain Paul McGinley showed up, Donaldson knew his match might be the decider. After his tee shot found the fairway, he stuck a wedge from 134 metres to within a foot to close out Bradley, 4 & 3, and secure the Cup for Europe.

Here teacher Dean Reinmuth tells us what's to love about Donaldson's swing.



### Jamie Donaldson

A swing that passed the Ryder Cup test

#### **ELBOWS IN**

"I really like Jamie's setup," says
Golf Digest teaching professional Dean
Reinmuth. "Check out the part of his right arm where you'd give blood: It's pointed slightly right of the target. That presets a perfect takeaway. He looks a bit like
Nicklaus in his prime."

#### **HIPS STAY IN PLACE**

Halfway back and towards the top, Donaldson's arms are creating a wide swing arc as he winds his body. "You can see a bit of daylight between his right upper arm and chest (position 2)," Reinmuth says. "Yet his belt buckle has barely moved from where it was at address."

#### QUIET HANDS

Donaldson is in a powerful position at the top. His clubface is slightly closed (pointing skyward), which Reinmuth likes. "Very few good golfers play from an open face position at the top," he says. "It requires too much hand action to square the club in time for impact."

#### ► DONALDSON'S 2014 STATS









Driving distance M (57th) Greens in reg. (72nd)

Scrambling (7th)

Putts per round (35th)

SOURCE: EUROPEAN TOUR



#### **A LITTLE SHIFT**

"I love the move Jamie makes to start the downswing," Reinmuth says. "Look at his left leg: There's a slight lateral movement. And his right elbow is just below his left, which shows he's retaining his wrist hinge beautifully without letting the club get stuck behind his body."

#### **IMPACT IS SPOT ON**

As the club gets to the ball, Donaldson's hips have not turned open much, and his arms and club are squarely in front of him. Reinmuth notes his impact alignments:
"His head is well behind the ball, and his left leg has straightened. Good power positions."

#### **ENERGY FORWARD**

Past impact and into the finish, the energy of the swing goes forward, not up, Reinmuth says. "His weight has transferred to the outside of his left foot, which has released off the ground. Johnny Miller used to do this. That's why Jamie's hips stay level and he stays in perfect balance."

#### **PRO-FILE**

JAMIE DONALDSON 39 / 5-foot-11 79 kilograms Macclesfield, England

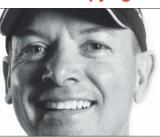
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## Tiger and the Yips

What we can learn from the 14-time Major winners' short game woes

NEVER imagined I would be writing an article about Tiger Woods' short game and the trouble it is currently causing him. After watching footage of the Waste Management Open, I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

So what is he doing wrong? Without being too technical, there are major differences between his 'old' setup and technique and his new one. Most significant is the amount of movement he now has in his lower body. The Tiger of old had a vertical spine position and a

solid base for his short game. His legs remained quiet until impact, which allowed his chest and hips to rotate through, allowing him to extend his arms and hold them at '4 o'clock'.

His new setup, however, shows more tilt in his spine and a lot of movement in his lower body. This lower body movement creates problems with ball flight and distance control, which in turn creates inconsistent results.

Many players have tinkered with their short game during their careers, but this can cause a loss of feel, which is the most important part of the short game as feel gives us control over both distance and ball flight.

Tiger would probably benefit from viewing footage of his short game from tournaments played between 1997 and 2000. He produced some great shots during that time in his career and I am sure we would all like to see him back playing that way again.

If you need help on your short game, email me at

jason@jasonlawsgolf.com



rovic

# clicgear MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

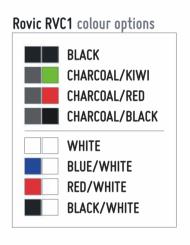


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# **ACCESSORIES**

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# **Stroke Path:** Straight or Curved?

# The answer might surprise you

E CAN finally put to rest the age-old question of whether a proper stroke moves the putterhead straight along the target line or on an arc that goes inside the line on the backstroke and inside again on the through-stroke. The answer? It does both, but it's a matter of perspective.

First, look at the photos below of professional

golfer Chris Trunzer. In the left photo, the stroke appears to be tracking directly along the target line. In the right photo, it's clearly moving inside the line. So which is correct? Actually, it's the same stroke. The only difference is the position of the camera.

In the first photo, the camera lens is set up in the same plane that the putterhead is swinging in (about eight inches to the left of the target line), which makes it appear to be moving straight along the target line. In the second photo, the camera is directly behind the line. This gives the appearance that the stroke is arcing to the inside before and after impact, but the stroke has not changed. In both cases, the putter stayed on plane and the putterface stayed square to that plane. These images reveal the natural swing plane in putting, something I discovered through my research.

To help you visualise this plane, see the image on the next page. Picture a circular piece of glass (a plane) with a hole in the centre through which your head and shoulders can protrude. Now imagine getting into your normal putting setup with the putterhead in this plane and your hands sitting below the plane. The



# "The same stroke can look straight or curved, depending on where you're standing."

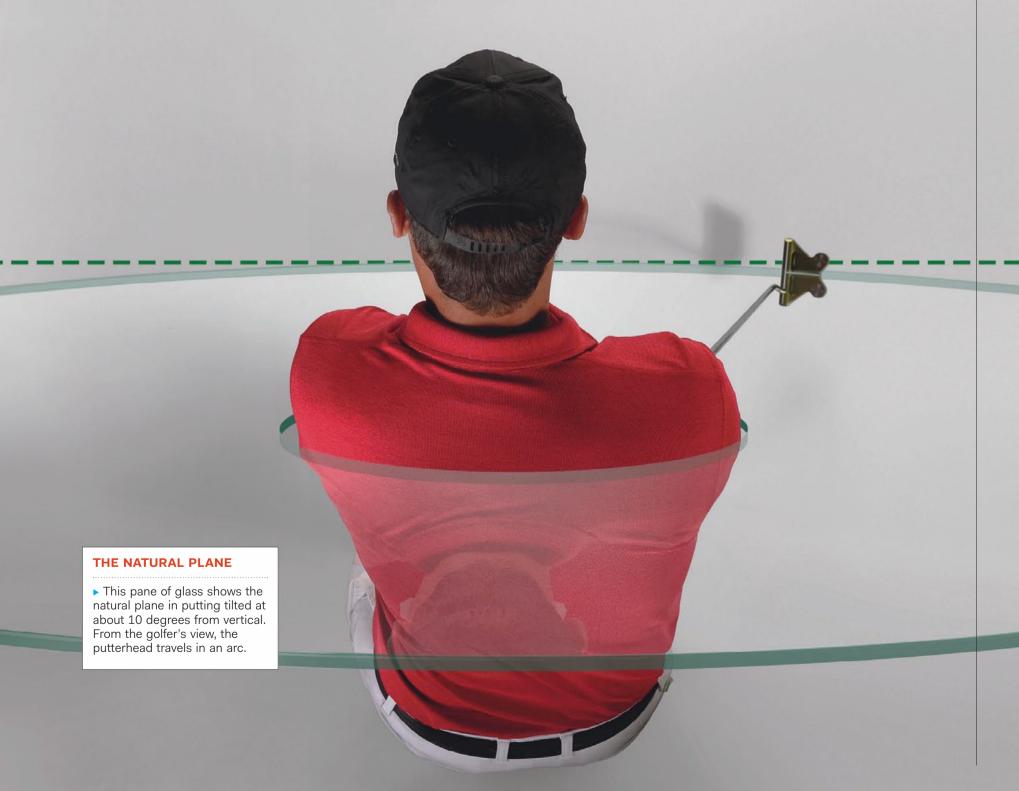
glass would be tilted at about 10 degrees from vertical, with your eyes over the ball and the centre of the putterface. Now if you looked down at the bottom edge of this piece of glass (remember your eyes are protruding through it) the swing path along that edge would appear to trace an arc. But if an observer looked at the path from within the plane, the path would look like a straight line. This is perhaps why some people assume you have to make an arcing stroke, and others insist the putter should move straight back and straight through. It's a matter of the observer's position relative to the plane.

This is all very interesting to someone like me, who studies putting, but hopefully it is for you, too. It has a massive effect on how well you putt. To achieve this natural

plane, my advice is to use the image of the putterhead swinging along the piece of glass. If you try to force an arc, your mind will be trying to tell your body what to do and not letting the stroke happen naturally, leading to another source of error. Instead, let your body do what's comfortable, without manipulation. It wants to let the shoulders, arms, wrists, hands and putter - the fixed structure - rock back and forth in a pendulum-like fashion, with the rhythm influenced by the inertia of this structure. This allows you to swing within the plane and will naturally limit a lot of the extraneous movements that typically cause you to miss putts. I call these movements "degrees of freedom," and there are six of them. They include rotating the putterface open or closed; moving the putterhead on a diagonal outside or inside the path; and breaking the wrists. These movements are the culprits in most missed putts. For more consistency, your goal should be to constrain most of the degrees of freedom except for letting the putter move back and through at a comfortable rhythm. This will happen naturally if you don't try to manipulate the path. If you practise letting your body do what it wants to do, putting is easy. Just let it happen.

Frank Thomas is the founder of Frankly Golf and created the Certified Putting Instructor course to help professionals teach putting. He was technical director of the USGA for 26 years and has written four books on golf, most recently

The Fundamentals of Putting.



# Most X-out balls conform to the rules and are suitable for use.



# **Roll With It**

# Five important things to remember about the ball you're playing

- 1 That X-out, practice or refurbished golf ball may be used during a round unless there's evidence that it doesn't conform to the rules. However, if you're playing in a tournament, check with event officials to find out if they require you to use a model on the List of Conforming Golf Balls, which doesn't include these types of balls.
- 2 You may clean a ball that has mud or anything else sticking to it after your ball is on the green, or if you're lifting it from off the green to follow a rules procedure. There are three excep-

tions when you may not clean a ball when it's lifted from off the green: (1) You're lifting it to determine whether it's unfit for play; (2) You're moving the ball because it's assisting or interfering with the play of another golfer; (3) You're trying to determine if the ball is yours. In this case, you may clean it only to the extent necessary to identify it.

3 You can replace a ball that is in play if it's cut, cracked or has lost its shape. If it's only scuffed or worn, it may be replaced between holes or if another rule allows you to make a

substitution. To replace an unfit ball during the play of a hole, announce your intention to inspect the ball and mark its position. Give your group a chance to inspect it and watch you switch it out of play. If it's unfit, place a new ball where the original lay.

- 4 You may pick up a ball you think is yours to identify it, but first tell the golfers in your group what you're about to do, and mark its position. Also, give them a chance to watch the lifting and replacement. Placing a clear identification mark on your ball is suggested.
- 5 Before lifting your ball on a putting green, you must mark it (a coin or similar object is recommended). The mark should be placed immediately behind the ball's position, though it can be placed one or more clubheadlengths to the side if it interferes with the stance, stroke or play of another golfer.

golf balls, and you can't tell them apart when you're in the fairway?

Both balls are considered lost. Take a stroke penalty, and return to the tee to play your third shot.



#### DID YOU KNOW?

If your ball breaks into pieces as a result of a stroke, the stroke is cancelled and you must play another ball as close as possible to the spot where the previous shot was played.

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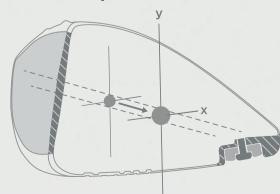
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Why everything changes on the long-drive hole

you feel like a man again: "Long Drive Contest." Doesn't matter that you couldn't get to the stake out there with driver-driver, or that your body's coming down off five schooners and a carb load. You remind yourself, Hey man, I played high school footy. You find your focus, rear back and

metres, but probably can't. You only throw off your downswing sequence. You jerk the club from the top and get all armsy. It might feel strong, but you've got no schwack at the ball. Take your time winding up, then move everything through together. You just might put one out there.

greenside bunker.

# 2015 SHERATON FIJEVILLA TEAMS CHALLENGES

Sunday 9th August - Friday 14th August 2015



# Bula Fiji!

The Sheraton Villa Teams Challenge has been referred to as the 'Best South Pacific Teams Challenge' - come join mixed teams of four in a fun filled week of social activities, playing 4 rounds of golf on the Denarau G&RC, scored under the PaR nz Points System™.

The Sheraton Villa Teams Challenge package is extensive and includes six night packages staying at one of the many Sheraton properties on Denarau Island – The Sheraton, The Westin and Sheraton Villas – if you enter before 20th March 2015, your 7th night is free. Extend your stay in Fiji to include rounds of golf at Natadola (Home of The Fiji International) and island hop to the new Sheraton Tokoriki Island Resort.

Special fares with Fiji Airways – book with PaR nz Golfing Holidays and your golf bag travels for free.

Come join the fun in the sun.











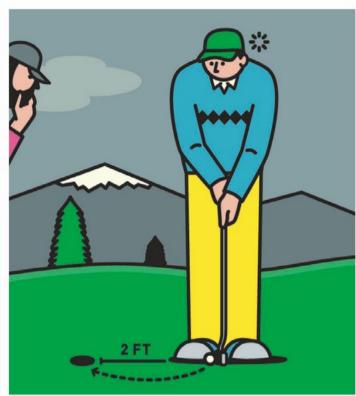


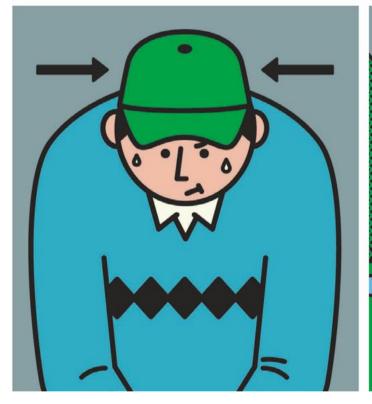
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# "Best tip: Don't be too careful. Firm it in the back."









## Why'd I Do That?

# Never miss a two-footer

OU just hit a great iron shot or chipped it close. Now you've got two feet left. Curiously, your opponent isn't saying boo. So you go up to tap it in, draw the putter back and ... Oh no! Power lip-out.

We've all done it, a lot. The

real problem is, most golfers have an unspoken pact with their mates that they don't have to make short putts. Everybody sweeps them away. Then when they get in a tournament they're looking at these two-footers thinking, *Oh man, I could miss that*. Plus, there's often a lot of foot traffic around the cup, causing marks and bumps. More food for nervous thought.

So here's what you need to do when you face a testy short putt: First, be aware of making a good stroke. Don't just walk up and swipe at the ball.

Second, read the slope and align your putterface carefully. Even two-footers can break enough to miss.

Third, keep your head still until well after the ball is gone. Most short misses happen because the player wants to see the ball fall into the cup or tries to steer it in. Last, don't be too careful. Stick with your normal putting routine and put a firm, confident stroke on it.



## TELL YOURSELF FINISH IT OFF!

To make short putts, practise committing to your target. Try this drill: (1) Find a flat two-footer on the practice green, and stick a tee in the far edge of the cup. (2) Address the ball, and aim your putterface at the tee. Be very precise. Even have a friend check it. (3) After a while, take the tee away and pick a target, like a blade of grass, on the back of the cup. Stroke to that spot. On the course, tell yourself something positive, like Finish it off!



## THIS HAPPENED ON TOUR

Coming to the 72nd hole of the 2012 Kraft Nabisco Championship, I.K. Kim had made birdie putts on 16 and 17 for a onestroke lead. On the 18th green, she rolled her birdie putt to within 12 inches. The tournament was over, until she lipped out. "It was so short, I didn't really read the putt," Kim said. "I felt like I was rushing. You have to read the putt, no matter what." Kim lost on the first hole of sudden-death to Sun Young Yoo.

**Jim McLean** is a Golf Digest Teaching Professional.



Switch off for the future of Aussie food

**Saturday 28 March 8.30pm**Global warming is already affecting Aussie farms, the very farms that supply 93% of the food we eat. Help shine a light on this issue.







# Laidback Lucas

# One of our brightest prospects doesn't take golf too seriously - and it's working

UCAS HERBERT is not your average amateur golfer. Ask him to name his favourite golfer and he won't reminisce about Tiger Woods' immortal 2000/2001 season. He won't get emotional talking about Adam Scott's historic Masters triumph and he won't point to a poster of Jack Nicklaus' 18 majors glued to his bedroom wall.

He will, however, tell you that his "all-time favourite" player is European Tour veteran Robert Rock, of England. Why? "Because he looks exactly like one of my childhood mates from Bendigo, Phil DeAraugo," says Herbert, trying hard not to laugh. "If Robert's on TV we say, 'Phil's playing in Dubai' or 'Phil's playing at St Andrews'."

At face value, it's just a comical anecdote. But beneath the surface this recollection speaks volumes of the 19-year-old's approach to the game and, more importantly, why it's successful – he doesn't take golf too seriously.

After claiming low-amateur honours at the 2014 BetEasy Masters and Australian Open, sharing 11th and 23rd place respectively, it would be easy to believe your own hype – particularly if you shot a course record, 7-under par 65 at Metropolitan Golf Club.

But not Herbert.

"The fact is, I didn't win; I came 11th and 23rd, which is average for most of the guys," says Herbert. "Those results boost your confidence but you have to work hard to not get ahead of yourself. I am proud of mixing it with those great players I'll have to come up against in the future."

It would also be easy to dwell on the 72nd hole at Metro, where a double-bogey dropped Herbert to 11th place and stripped him of the automatic Australian Open qualification enjoyed by the top 10 finishers. "It was a characterbuilding moment; sometimes things don't go your way and I was pretty upset," says Herbert. "But half an hour later, the conversation with Dad was, 'How are we going to win (the Monday pre-qualifying round) tomorrow? How are we going to play?""

The 48 hours that followed have become part of Aussie amateur golf folklore; the Herbert family drives from Melbourne to Sydney overnight, unable to catch a flight. With little sleep, Herbert shoots a 5-under 67 at Carnarvon Golf Club to nab one of the last spots in our national championship — capped by a

15-foot birdie putt on the last to make it on the number. "There are plenty of ways to get into the Aussie Open," he says.

Such performances in the pro ranks in 2014, combined with runner-up finishes at the Callaway World Junior and the World Amateur Team championships, attract the inevitable question of when the amateur world No.33 will turn professional. But a composed Herbert insists it's several years and "20 metres off the tee" away. "It's a couple of years away; I have to get a lot stronger with the way golf is heading," he says. "You need length just to compete now and I average 260m off the tee. I'd like to pick up 10 or 20m and improve the accuracy."

His approach seems measured, but it always has been. When a 5-year-old Herbert notched three holes-in-one in a week at Robina's Floating Aussie Golf Challenge [inset], he didn't assume it was a given right to become a golf pro. Nor did he after shooting a career-low round of 10-under par 61 at his home club of Neangar Park, Victoria.

So who does the Commonwealth Golf Club member thank for where he is in the sport today? His parents, definitely, but he could also thank the camaraderie among his Golf Australia National Squad teammates Ryan Ruffels and Antonio Murdaca. "We love seeing each other do well but we hate being beaten; at the gym or on the course. It drives us."

Or, he could thank his grandfather for buying him a set of clubs at the age of 2. "I know he's watching over me and helping me play well. I owe him a favour for getting me into golf."



Now a Golf
Australia Tier 1
national squad
member, Lucas
Herbert celebrates
a hole-in-one at the
age of 5 [below].

#### **Aussie of the Month**

# Richard Green

HE Victorian left-hander starred in a weeklong highlight reel that may never be emulated.

Having arrived home in February, the 44-year-old got the script rolling when he proposed to partner and fellow professional golfer Marianne Skarpnord. Then on the eve of the Oates Victorian Open, the happy couple moved into their new home at Thirteenth Beach Golf Links on Victoria's

Bellarine Peninsula. Just two days later in the Vic Open pro-am, Green made headlines around the world when he aced the 15th at Thirteenth Beach, a 283-metre par 4. A video of the incredible shot – which ricocheted out of a greenside bunker and into the hole – went viral and made the three-time European Tour winner an overnight Internet sensation.

would hit a driver and see what happens. I just pushed it a little bit, it was a good shot, but I knew it was going in the bunker so I was completely oblivious to the fact that it had made its way to the hole somehow."

Green's fairytale just got better on Sunday. His 29-yearold Norwegian fiancé captured the women's Victorian Open, which concurrently with the men's event at the same venue.

Shortly afterwards Green won the men's Vic Open, defeating Australian Masters champion Nick Cullen with a birdie on the second playoff hole. He had finally won the Vic Open after 23 long years.

Green reflected: "The last few years I have thoroughly enjoyed coming here to play. It's one of those tournaments that I have wanted on my list, more so than some others around the world. It's been very important to me."



# They're Doing What?

YOU'VE heard of World Series Poker, now get ready for the World Series of Golf. With the desire to inject new interest into the game, pros and amateurs alike will have the chance to share in a prize pool worth \$250,000 in Australia's inaugural World Series of Golf at Castle Hill Country Club on June 30.

Celebrities including former NRL player Braith Anasta, who plays off scratch, and tour pro Paul Gow will feature in golf's version of Twenty20 cricket. The format and rules are like no other golf tournament. Players compete against their group - not against the field - on a 12-hole course. There will also be multiple-cup holes and a bag limit of just five clubs per player.

"It's a great concept that will hopefully attract more fans to golf, with the rules designed so that anyone can beat anyone on any given day," Anasta said.

"It's what every amateur dreams of - standing over a six to eight-foot putt to win \$20-30,000. Let's just say I'll be getting plenty of practice in between now and June." But there's one catch. To enter, participants have to cough up \$3,000. For more information, go to worldseriesofgolf.net



# HEADLIN

• JASON DAY: Overtook Adam Scott as Australia's topranked golfer

when he rose to No.4 on the Official World Golf Ranking following his victory in the

Farmers Insurance Open. Tied with J.B.

Holmes, Harris English and Scott Stallings after 72 holes, Day emerged from the four-man playoff with his third US PGA Tour title.

> • SU OH: The 18-yearold Victorian won the RACV Ladies Masters on the Gold Coast in just her second event as a pro. Playing on invitation, the former world No.1 amateur birdied her last four holes

at Royal Pines to win by three strokes and earn a Ladies European Tour card.

• MATHEW GOGGIN: Sealed a four-shot victory at the Panama Claro Championship, the first event on the 2015 Web.com Tour. It was the 40-year-old Tasmanian's second Panama title and fifth win on the Web.com Tour.

· ANDREW DODT:

Captured his second European Tour title at the inaugural True Thailand Classic in Hua Hin. The 29-year-old Queenslander ended a five-season victory drought with three consecutive 67s over the Black Mountain layout to edge



- AARON TOWNSEND: Holed a bunker shot on the final hole to win the Victorian PGA Championship at Huntingdale by one stroke from Scott Strange. The victory was the Novocastrian's third PGA Tour of Australasia title.
- **DEYEN LAWSON:** The third-year apprentice from Curlewis Golf Club won the Rich River Trainee Classic.



# **Hope Island Paradise**

# Peter Thomson combines links golf and resort wow-factor with this Sunshine State treasure

TANDING on the tee of the par-5 18th hole at Hope Island, it's just as easy to see five-times British Open champion Peter Thomson's love for the links as it is to plonk one straight into the lake.

It's no secret Thomson has a deep affection for the windswept British links courses he dominated Open Championship fields on either side of two decades, and his passion projects like this Gold Coast gem reflect just that.

The Links Hope Island came in at No.41 in the AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST Top 100 Courses and its closing hole is arguably one of the best par 5s in Australia. The 511-metre hole is well bunkered and has the lake intimidating golfers down the left.

Thomson has achieved the unique feeling that each hole is completely different to the next, yet all 18 are in sync with his design philosophy. Although this region is often referred to as the 'Golf Coast', Hope Island

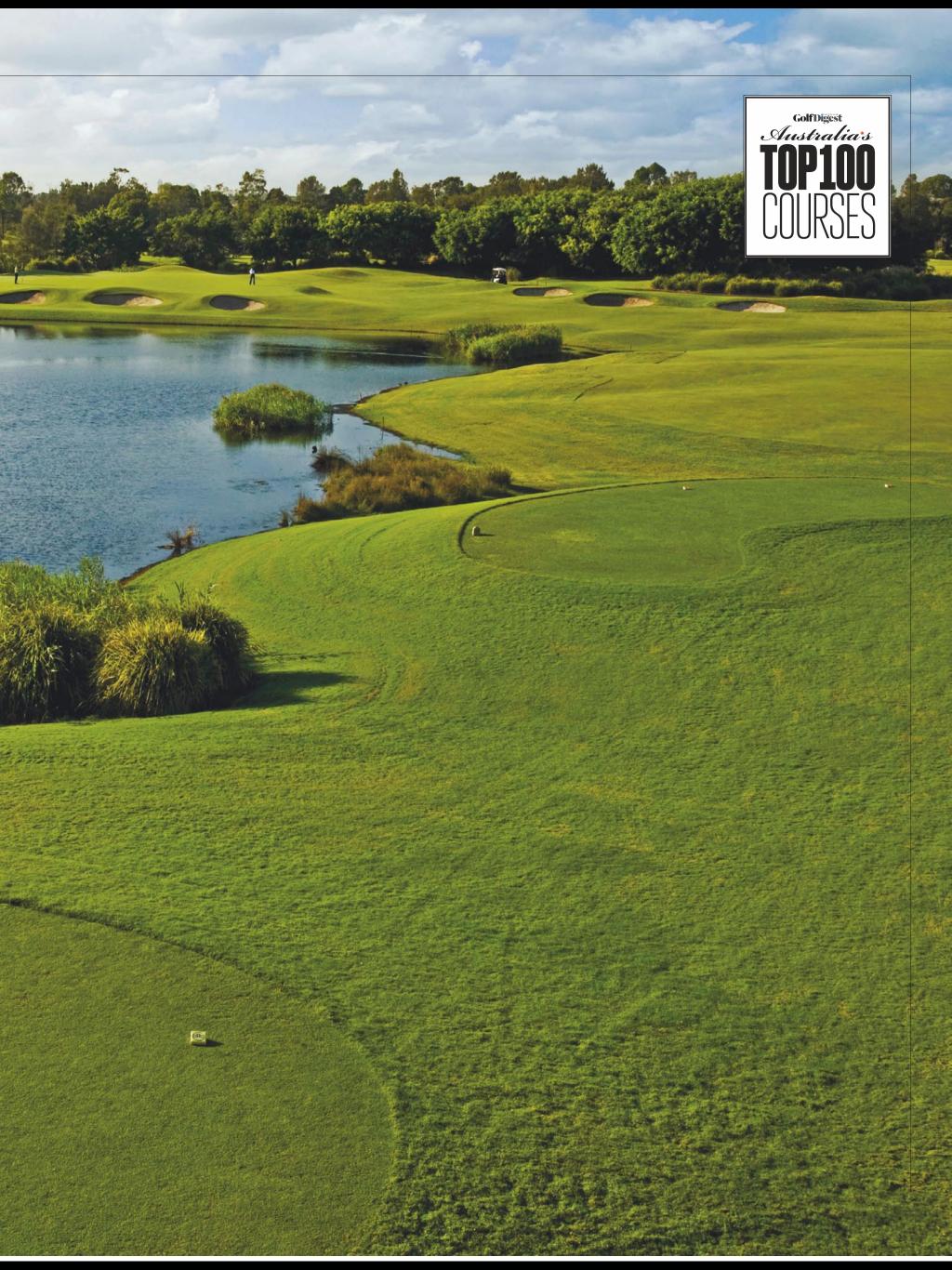
is the essential visit. The par-72 layout layout offers the vista of a coastal links course in Scotland, but with the added resort feel and Queensland natural wetlands to give it a unique Australian flavour.

Rolling Wintergreen couch fairways seldom offer a flat lie, while the 1m-layer of Coomera River sand overlaying the whole course gives the landscaping real wow-factor. Subtle hazards such as tussock-fringed rough deliver a fair test of golf, but the bunkering is the standout feature at Hope

Island. They're trademark of the Thomson Perrett design company and each of the 128 pot bunkers on the 6,500m layout appears to be in harmony with the natural environment

The next time you're in this part of the Sunshine state, The Links Hope Island simply must be played.

Contact: (07) 5530 9000 Gree fee: \$140 (Monday -Thursday); \$150 (weekend) Location: Hope Island Rd, Hope Island, Gold Coast QLD





#### Bullying In My Workplace

Harassment on the golf course can create a hazardous environment ... quite literally E'RE at Twin Creeks in western Sydney and I'm in a cart with a guy who constantly waives his AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST seniority in my face.

The ninth hole is laid out before us. Now, this is a golf hole. At 545 metres any buffoon (nearly) would classify it as long. Yes, the drive is downhill, but the final shot is uphill, so the two cancel each other out. And while offering a generous landing zone, if you can actually get hold of your drive, if you can get all that weighting and lofting stuff into the right slots on the bottom of your club, and you get through the ball with purpose and whack the almighty shizenhausen out of it, the bunkers left and right most certainly come into play.

'I'm on the golf course and this is my workplace. There were no posters about bullying on the golf cart, but it felt like there should've been'

Even for me.

I'm guessing it's why they were put there, right? Graham Marsh is no buffoon; he knew what he was doing. And I knew what I was doing when I pulled my trusty 3-wood out of the bag to hit from the tee.

I was 'laying up'. On my best day, I might be able to get to the green in two, but so far, this was not my best day. My boss, or at the very least, the person two spots closer to going to Augusta (should an invitation arrive in the mail), was on the tee flailing about with his driver. He hit first and the noise of the shot made me ask to see his driver face because it would surely have a great, dimpled dent in it. No such luck. After clearing the left bunkers, his ball must have hit a sprinkler head or the downhill side of a

Twin Creek turtle because it took off. It was massive. With pursed lips reminiscent of Alec Baldwin about to mutter a smutty line, he said, "chase that."

"Don't have to," I said, knowing I probably sounded like 12-year-old.

"Yes, you do."

"No, I don't actually."

"You know you want to."

"Don't want to. Don't have to. Won't." I'd regressed to seven and was thankful for my ability to refrain from adding "Nyeh nyehnee-nye, Nyeeeer!"

"Man up, Dandy Andy. It's a par 5. Everyone hits driver."

"I don't want to go in the bunkers, do I? I read the section on golf course management a few issues ago. I pay attention."

"Yeah, but ... you won't even make the bunkers with your driver. The way you powder puff it, you'd be lucky to make the ladies tee. Hit driver. Be a maaaaaaan!"

"Be a man?" As opposed to a little boy? But then he said, "Seriously, hit driver. Just rip it. It's over half-a-kilometre, it's further than you go for a run."

He had me there. So I grabbed the driver, had a couple of waggles. Lined up to the left because I might slice it, and then remembered I'd hooked the last one, so I lined up to the right. Then, because it felt like I might slice but wasn't certain, I aimed for the middle. I let rip. Like, I hit it so hard I almost put my neck out, just to show him that I could reach the bunkers and he was wrong, and the ball went straight. As in, very straight. Right at the gap between the bunkers, right where I was aiming. And it was awesome. Maybe it hit a downslope or something, but it went for miles. It went past the bunkers and while not quite at his longdriving self, not that far behind him.

At 238m to the pin, this was beyond my newfound awesomeness, so with 5-iron in hand I was ready to lay up. You know, put the third close and walk off with a four, worst case, five. Happy? You bet.

"Have a go," he says from behind me. "Get on in two, mate. Have a crack at it." "Just going to lay up. I can't get that far and miss all those bunkers at the same time. Not happening."

"Have a go, you mug. Don't die wondering. Smash it. You should smash it. Get on in two. Don't be a woozer."

So look. I'm pretty thick skinned, right? But this was getting very close to crossing the line from general good-time stirring to workplace bullying. I mean, I'm on the golf course, I write for a golf magazine and this is my workplace. And even though there are no posters against bullying in the golf cart or on my golf bag, it felt like there should have been. I'm pretty sure he was the guy who put the new bullying poster on the back of our toilet door at work; the one with my face sticky-taped onto it.

"Just laying up, mate. You do what you want."

"You'll hit a 3-wood and have a crack or you can play off the ladies tees, mate. Jeeeeeeez."

This went on for a while until he questioned the size of my appendage and then, whether I had one at all.

I had this voice inside me that was saying, "You should start a social media campaign, or a bunch of them. It could be awesome. You could stand up for all the other dudes, small appendages or not, who want to lay up. You know?"

#layoffmylayup
#I'llhitmy5ironifIwantto
@I'llchoosemyclubthanks
#thesizeofmyweinerhasnothingtodowithhowIplaygolf
@5ironisthenew3wood
@what'ssospecialaboutgettingon
apar5in2shots?
#IhitdistanceballsbecauseIlikethefeelofthem
#longwalkingsocksarecool

So that's what I'm going to do. Are you with me? I did hit 5-iron, by the way. Sliced it like a cake. Straight. Into. The. Bunkers.

#Shouldhavepumpeda3wood

Find **Andrew Daddo** at getafreakinlife.com

# Escape to Magenta...

Set amongst some of the most inspiring and unspoilt surroundings on a pristine peninsular between Tuggerah Lakes and the Pacific Ocean on the NSW Central Coast and just 90 minutes drive from Sydney's CBD, is The Pullman Magenta Shores Resort 5 star beachfront spa resort and Magenta Shores Golf & Country Club, a private and exclusive Ross Watson designed championship 18-hole golf course.

Magenta Golf offers members and guests an opportunity to play a unique and challenging golf course. Golfers can enjoy magnificent ocean views from the front 9-holes, with the back 9-holes adjacent to the rainforest and National Parks.

Rated number 26 in the Australian Golf Digest's Top 100 Courses for 2014, playing Magenta is to experience a golf club of pure indulgence and a culture of ultimate luxury and elegance, offering not only a unique location and golfing experience but also excellence in facilities and services for golfers of all levels.

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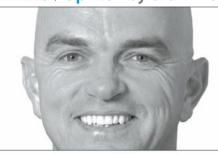


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#### **Great Divide**

Separating the best from the rest often comes down to the things you can't see in a player's swing

T'S January, and if you live Down Under and are a lover of world-class sport, that means settling down on the coach for two weeks of Australian Open tennis. Everyone who matters has made the trip. The broadcasting is outstanding, the competitors accessible and giving of themselves, and the atmosphere electric. I'm not a huge tennis fan but I love observing a great contest and that's what this tournament gives you, in spades.

Tonight I'm watching a match between one of the all-time greats of the game, Rafael Nadal, and a virtually unknown American

qualifier, Tim Smyczek. On paper it is a no contest. Number three in the world against a 27-year-old with no pedigree, ranked number 112. Sixty-four ATP victories versus none, but the American will have none of it. In fact he's brilliant; a match for the Spaniard in power, precision and will to win. It is an engrossing battle.

But in the end, he's not a match on the scoreboard. Nadal wins 7-5 in the fifth set, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat. The finest of lines separated them for over four hours. On a talent level, they are almost indistinguishable; both hitting sizzling, passing shots that have the packed crowd in awe. A serve here, a volley there, and Smyczek could have been the victor. Instead, he's heading back to qualifying, something he's done way too much of for his liking through his eight years as a professional.

As I sit here contemplating the whys and hows of Smyczek's situation, the mind shifts to the all-too-familiar parallels with tournament golf and the eternal questions posed. In a world where talent is a given, why do some take that next step, and others baulk?

What is the difference between top 10 in the world, and eeking out an existence on the periphery of professional sport? A superficial response would suggest that some credit be given to genes, some to physiology, a little to work ethic and intelligence, and a dash allocated to access to information through quality coaching.

A more encompassing answer, however, takes into account a combination of decision making, clarity of mind under pressure, self belief and distraction control. In other words, what goes on between the ears. When I think back through all the years of playing on tour and the hundreds of talented players that I saw during that time, it is now clear to me that those who rose above the pack had an element of mental strength over and above the mean. It's not a measurable quality, but it shows itself in the times of greatest stress. The six footer to make the weekend cut on Friday afternoon; the final-round par save from a bare lie across a hazard; the birdie on the 72nd hole to close out a championship ... all skills that elite professionals can execute

When it comes to professional golf's elite, it's what you can't see in a player that distinguishes them from the rest of the field.

time and time again in practice, but as history often shows, when push comes to shove, some guys have it and some don't.

Everyone who makes it onto the protour can play. Walk along a range at an event anywhere in the world and you'll find astonishing parity with regard to the ball flight of most of the competitors in the field. A few will stand out from the crowd; there is no disguising the majesty of Adam Scott's ball flight or the purity of strike of Rory McIlroy.

However, for the rest of those launching ball after ball into the great unknown, the uninitiated would struggle to differentiate who was higher on the world golf rankings through observation alone.

My night on the couch merely serves to reinforce what we already suspect about elite sport; sorting your Smyczeks from your Stensons almost always comes down to the things you can't see.

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#### The Fast and the Furry

#### Why do green speeds vary so much?

TIS because of the grass type, right? Or is it all about the height of the cut? Is there more to green speeds than just whether we are putting on Bent or Bermuda? To find out, we asked three leading Australian superintendents, who each came up with a different set of factors that can influence green speeds.

**>>**1

WHY do green speeds vary so much? My initial answer would be – do they? It has been proven that golfers' perception of green speed is not as good as they think it is and that even US PGA

Tour pros can't tell the difference between a green running at 9ft or 10ft. Anyone that tells you that they can guess the speed of a green by simply putting on it is doing exactly that, guessing. Having said that, we as superintendents do everything that we can to make the greens as consistent in speed across the board as possible. In setting up for the Qatar Masters we stimped (measured the speed of) every green up to three times per day for two weeks running into the event. We used this information to plan our maintenance on individual greens, whether it was additional rolling or cutting to speed them up, or watering

to slow them down. It was immediately obvious that some greens were inherently quicker than others and sometimes for no apparent reason. The 11th green always stimped at least one foot quicker than others in spite of it being in a sheltered, damp location. As a result we would only single-cut this green to get our tournament speed as opposed to the double-cutting and rolling required on other greens. Interestingly, Ernie Els left a putt in the jaws on the second day on the 11th and commented that the green was clearly slower than the rest. Even the best in the world can get it wrong. Some factors which will influence

green speed are grass type, soil type and moisture, slope, grain, thatch levels and compaction. All these factors can vary not only between different greens but also within greens themselves. This can make true consistency very hard to find.

Robin Doodson - Doha Golf Club, Qatar

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MANY factors influence green speed, including thatch accumulation, fertiliser and irrigation programs, mowing and rolling techniques, seasonal weather variations and turf varieties. At The Dunes I tried to maintain a consistent green



speed of 10-11 feet measured using a Stimpmeter. Perhaps a little slow by Sandbelt standards, but not so on a 'links course'. I was once accused of presenting two-paced greens, but after some investigation realised the golfer didn't understand the effect of the 'links wind'. Basically they putted faster downwind and slower into the wind. On top of that, greens putting at 10 feet in the early morning were often putting at 12 feet-plus once baked all day by summer sun and wind.

Bent grass is the preferred turf specie and some of the new seed varieties are more dense and upright, therefore perhaps producing a slower green than other creeping varieties. The fastest and perhaps smoothest greens I ever putted on were 100 per cent Poa annua, considered by many as an invasive weed.

Modern greenkeepers are very good at thatch management and many apply very little fertiliser (especially nitrogen) so greens are grown with a 'lean and mean' approach. Hungry turf equals less growth, therefore greater speed. However, when inputs are low there is much more stress on turf so managing actually requires greater human input as hand watering and constant monitoring is needed, especially in summer.

Regular mowing and rolling are also an obvious influence. High quality courses generally hand-mow greens and then roll to improve speed and smoothness, whereas not-so-affluent clubs mow with ride-on mowers and perhaps roll only for special events. In my opinion, ride-on mowers just don't provide the same quality of cut as walk-mowers, but again labour is needed to cut 19-plus greens ahead of the field.

In southern climates autumn and spring provide greater natural growth than summer and winter, so putting speed will vary seasonally. Recently I have been working at Redcliffe Golf Club in Brisbane. In summer you could mow greens every few hours as quick greens are slow by late

afternoon, whereas in winter they behave and putt similar to quality bent greens.

Natural grain and thatch development are characteristics of Tifgreen 328 turf. Downgrain, greens are faster than into it, and excessive thatch accumulation can affect smoothness. We have been working to improve overall putting quality by modifying fertiliser application and introduced a more intensive dethatching program. So far the greens are putting smoothly but 'grainy areas' are taking longer to recover than expected.

Mark Gahan, Redcliffe Golf Club

**>>>** 

THE first thing golfers need to understand is that golf is played on a living, growing plant that constantly changes depending on the weather and other outside influences.

I can think of 30 items that can influence putting green speeds ever so slightly. The top five, in no particular order, begin with cutting and rolling. The height of cut and frequency is an important factor to maintaining green speeds. The more often they are cut the less chance there is of the speeds varying. If you incorporate rolling into your greens preparation, this again slightly alters the speed. The greens that are cut or rolled are normally at their fastest just after they have been prepared. Throughout the day the grass will grow and this will slow the ball down.

The second influence is grass variety. The three main varieties used on golf courses in Australia are Bentgrass, Poa and Couch grass. All three varieties have their own individual growing characteristics such as leaf blade types, grain and density. This becomes very obvious if you have different grass varieties growing at your course.

The third influence is green location. The positioning of the green and how nature influences the differing microclimates can lead to varying speeds. Exposed greens will be more affected by the wind, subsequently drying

out the moisture of the green or having the wind effect the ball when it is putted. Shade on the greens can also influence the growth of the grass on the putting surface throughout the day.

Number four is moisture. The moisture of the green influences the health of the plant. More moisture in the green subsequently means more moisture in the leaf of the plant. When there is a lot of moisture in the leaf the plant provides friction on the ball, therefore pulling up the ball on the putting surface. Most greens have different levels of moisture within the putting surface. This is caused by irrigation, contours, environmental conditions and the subsurface. Dips and hollows will hold more moisture compared to the higher sections of a putting green.

Last but not least is the environment. Each green has its own unique microenvironment that can be affected by buildings, trees, exposure to the wind and valleys. Again, all these factors will impact on the growth of the grass and behaviour of the putting surface.

Golfers are probably thinking that if the course superintendent knows all this why don't they do something about it to make sure the putting greens are all the same speed. During professional tournaments a management regime is implemented to make sure each green plays the same. This is an extremely labourintensive and costly program to undertake and the plant itself can only handle such practices for a short period of time. One of the best things about golf is that it is played in a natural environment with all its intricacies. This provides the ultimate challenge and is all part of the enjoyment of playing golf, even though it may be frustrating at times.

Leigh Yanner, The National Golf Club

Darius Oliver is a golf course design consultant and the author of Planet Golf and Planet Golf USA, which are available via planetgolf.com.au

'Some factors which will influence green speed are grass type, soil type and moisture, slope, grain, thatch levels and compaction. All these factors can vary not only between different greens but also within greens themselves. This can make true consistency very hard to find'

#### Laguna Love - Phuket resort back with a bang

T'S been more than a decade since my first visit to Banyan Tree resort in Phuket off the west coast of southern Thailand. The Thaistyle pool villas at Banyan Tree resort left an indelible impression. But my recollection of the golf course could best be described as underwhelming.

So it was with trepidation that I returned to Laguna Phuket, an upmarket beachfront retreat on the Andaman Sea. Spread over 1,000 acres of an abandoned tin mine, Laguna Phuket is considered to be one of Asia's finest integrated resorts since opening in 1987. Its luxurious hotels and villas are a stark contrast to bustling Patong Beach, the low-rent tourist haunt half hour down the coast.

The accommodation at Laguna Phuket features brand names such as Angsana, Banyan Tree, Dusit Thani and Outrigger. Eating options are plentiful with a choice of more than 30 restaurants and bars. The whole facility is interconnected by a series of tranquil waterways.

Hence, Laguna Phuket Golf Club was in urgent need of a makeover to bring it up to the standard of the surrounding establishments. After an 18-month refurbishment, the new layout opened in January. South African-born architect Paul Jansen has overseen a magnificent redesign of a course that had become rather tired since opening 23 years ago.

Measuring just 6,143 metres, the remodelled layout is full of character with elevated green complexes, generous bailout areas, beautifully crafted humps and hollows. The ground contouring is quite impressive along with novel concepts such as two-tiered



fairways and the placement of traditional Thai fishing boats in water bodies. The 14th even has railway sleepers on a steep bank flanking the left side of the green, while the 16th has a pronounced depression in the middle of the putting surface.

Jansen has shown he understands the challenges posed by modern equipment – how to make courses playable for the less-accomplished golfer and yet testing for elite players. For the

latter, he's placed a premium on accuracy by incorporating shelves in the green complexes, making it improbable to hole a putt from the wrong level after a misdirected approach.

In terms of playability, Jansen reduced the amount of sand by half and the number of bunkers to 37. It was a conscious declaration that sand poses little threat to the pro while having a detrimental impact on course maintenance and speed of play (especially at a

resort layout in the tropics where holidaymakers supply the bulk of daily rounds).

The end result is a fun course to play. As Jansen says, "If we are to keep the game interesting, then surely we need to be looking at embracing unconventional features from time to time. They are talking points – no doubt – but you never forget them and they add so much interest in a time when the game has become stereotyped and dull with little to discover."

#### LAGUNA PHUKET GOLF CLUB

DESIGNER
Paul Jansen
COURSE
6,719/6,100/5,771/5,227
yards (Black/Blue/White/
Red)
CONTACT

Tel +66-76-270-991, golf@lagunaphuket.com, lagunaphuketgolf.com





#### Golfers now have to contend with a very intimidating feature that will leave them both excited and on tender hooks.

#### **Embracing** Risqué Design **Features**

Placing wood ties on the edge of fairways and greens has given Laguna Phuket Golf Club its own identity

ANS want sports to entertain them - regardless of the game they're watching. We love watching batsmen hit boundaries and bowlers take wickets. We're glued to long. intense tennis rallies and we watch in awe when golfers hit daring shots or sink outrageous putts. So why should it be any different when we are playing the game ourselves?

There's nothing better to get

the adrenalin pumping than being asked to play a daring shot over some formidable and distinctive feature. It's these intimidating - sometimes unconventional – features that provide interest to a golf course and keep us engaged.

A sign of a good golf course is the ability to help the golfer remember each of the holes. Certainly, the holes I recall most fondly have unique features and this is what makes them so special.

How can one forget the rock walls dispersed around the links at North Berwick, the ruins at Pennard or the temples littered about Delhi Golf Club? What of those marram-clad bunkers at Royal County Down or the rail line that comes into play at Royal Colombo Golf Club? And who could forget those exceptional and unique green complexes at Michigan's Crystal Downs Country Club. These features add great interest as well as being a visual treat. Remove them and I bet the difference would be felt at once.

At the Laguna Phuket Golf Club in Thailand - a course I recently re-designed and built with the help of Australian Mark Lawson - we looked to transform a bland site into one oozing character. Our work was not inspired by anyone or anything. Instead, we looked to create something original that worked well with the land and would keep the golfer engaged from start to finish.

We tried to limit the number of 'commonly' used design features overall. We embraced a more risqué design approach and by doing so constructed features that are impressive to look at and formidable to play over, but also sustainable to build and maintain.

Take, for instance, the 14th hole, which was previously defined by a mass of featureless bunkers on relatively flat terrain. We reconfigured this hole so it's now identifiable by a two-tiered fairway and steep bank guarding the left side of the green. To give added definition and character, we decided to position wood ties

along the steep edge of that left bank [pictured]. Golfers now have to contend with a very intimidating feature that will leave them both excited and on tender hooks. Miss the green by a foot and you will be left with a thrilling recovery shot from three to four metres below the putting surface - a 'war story' to tell over a beer at the 19th.

Some golfers may consider the wood ties so close to the putting surface as unfair - even too penal - given that a ball could hit the wood blocks and bound some distance from the target. I find that ironic since a ball could quite easily bound off a sprinkler head or cart path positioned close to a green complex. If everything were laid out to be fair, then our golf courses would be monotonous affairs.

There are other unconventional features around Laguna Phuket. We built a tabletop fairway on the next hole and a Biarritz-style green on the long par-3 16th. The putting surface is about 55 metres in depth but only 12-15m in width, with a large depression through the centre. Many of the holes are predicated by humps, bumps, knolls and grass depressions (of varying sizes) and all have a dramatic effect on the play. We even positioned local fishing boats (half submerged) in some of the water bodies to give the course added identity and visual appeal.

Surely if we're to keep the game attractive moving forward, then we need to be looking at embracing more unconventional and distinctive features. When thinking about course design, I keep in mind this quote from the legendary Alister MacKenzie: "Anything stereotyped on a golf course should be avoided. Anything that keeps the game alive and prevents us being bored is an advantage."



Editor's note: Paul Jansen built his reputation as the lead designer for Nick Faldo, and is one of the world's brightest young course architects. Visit jansengolfdesign.com



#### Finding the Drive to Succeed

#### His coach says he's the best iron player in the world. Now US-bound Nick Cullen wants results off the tee

NOWING one of the greatest golfers of all time rebuilt his swing days after winning his first green jacket comforted Nick Cullen. But making it into a playoff with fellow lefty Richard Green at the Oates Victorian Open reassured the 30-year-old that tinkering with an Australian Masters-winning action was the right move.

Days after claiming the 1997 Masters by an astronomical 12 shots, Tiger Woods "freaked out" watching video footage of the swing that had the sporting world in awe.

While the South Australian didn't have quite the same stress levels about tinkering with the swing that held off a determined Adam Scott at the 2014 BetEasy Masters, Cullen refuses to hide

behind his 3-wood any longer. "The swing held up during the Australian Masters and the two wins I had before that, but I didn't hit many drivers all week," Cullen told AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST from the US. "I really relied on my 3-wood, but the courses are getting longer these days so if you can't pull out driver on a long par 4, you're really making it hard for yourself to win."

In addition to the famed gold jacket, victory at Metropolitan Golf Club came with invites to the US PGA Tour's Bridgestone Invitational, the European Tour's Dunhill Links Championship and the WGC HSBC Champions tournament.

But the 2012 Indonesia Open champion says he'll need consistency off the tee if he wants to announce himself at those events. "Some periods of driving are really good, some are pretty terrible," says Cullen. "It's about finding more fairways and being comfortable pulling driver out of the bag when I need to."

Cullen's coach, Craig Hanson, says his pupil's driving dilemmas stemmed from throwing the club outside on his takeaway.

"Nick would take the club a long way outside, so he'd have to adjust on the downswing," says Hanson. "We're matching up the plane on both sides of impact for repeatability; it's the key to taking Nick's the game to the next level."

Hanson says Cullen is "the best iron player in the world" and will secure a card on the European or US PGA Tour if he's able to marry up his finesse from the fairways with solid driving. "He's one of the best iron players in the world; definitely the best I've seen in my time," says Hanson. "He has a great compression line through the ball with limited face rotation, and an optimum impact position. When Nick strikes the ball, it's just a different sound to most tour players. His pitching, chipping and putting is world class and when he drives the ball consistently well I think you'll find him on the US PGA Tour doing some great things."

Cullen possesses an infectious self belief – not afraid to lay out his goals to the public. It's the reason he's moved to Atlanta, Georgia and why he'll spend many Mondays attempting to win last-minute entry to US PGA Tour events.

"I want to be on the US PGA Tour and win out there. It's where the best are and it's where I want to play," says Cullen. "It's every golfing kid's dream to win a Major, so that will always be a goal."

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golfbuddyglobal.com



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bluntumbrellas.com.au



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sandisk.com.au



#### I'd take a FedEx Cup over a PGA Championship. Anv dav.



#### **Undercover Tour Pro**

## Most of us are only in it for the money

HERE ARE MAYBE 10 GUYS OUT HERE playing for history. Ten guys who think about how fans will remember them 50 years from now, if at all. Each era has room for only so many names. Obviously, Tiger and Phil. Probably Ernie and Vijay. Rory's on his way, and a guy like Bubba has a chance. John Daly only won two majors, but he'll definitely be enshrined, maybe with his own Graceland.

On the other side, I'd say the vast majority of us are playing strictly for the money. You've got to play your arse off just to be relevant *right now*.

Sure, guys want to win and get trophies (I have two) and more than a few appreciate the concept of their place in history. But anybody with half a brain knows that's just a byproduct of doing well. Make money, get into events, keep your tour card – you've got to play pretty bloody good to do that.

Tell you what: I'd take a FedEx Cup over a US PGA Championship. Any day. This is our business. If you win the FedEx, you've had an incredible year. You've likely won the Tour Championship and probably another playoff event, and maybe even something in the regular season, too. The smallest possible total prizemoney you're looking at is around \$14 million. Your family is set for life, as long as you're not an idiot. At \$1.8 million, the US PGA Championship has actually become the largest winning payday of all four majors, but that's still shrapnel in comparison.

Some players will tell you they'd rather win a major, and mean it. All depends on circumstances. They're either wide-eyed, fresh out of college golf, or they've got a tidy pile banked. Thirty years from now the FedEx Cup might really mean something, but now to history buffs it's just a slightly better Race to Dubai. Henrik Stenson, there's a bloke who took a hard knock. He got robbed in a Ponzi scheme but then won both points races in 2013, and if you ask me, that was the best year anyone's ever had. Almost \$20 million.

British Open? Makes me pause a moment longer, but I'd still take the FedEx Cup. I know, the Open's the birthplace of golf and the oldest major, and to have your name etched on the Claret Jug is, well, remarkable. You're sharing eternity with Old Tom Morris and his kid. But Ben Curtis or Bill Haas? I know whose career I'd rather have.

US Open? I've watched it every year, either on television or playing in it, since I was 11 years old. Almost three decades. I know every moment and venue as well as anyone in the media. It's a very tough choice, but I still say FedEx Cup.

The Masters? You've found my breaking point. It's a special fraternity, where you get to go back every April for the rest of your life. That's a lot of residual value to your brand as a golfer. And because it's the first major on the calendar, it's also the most lucrative in the shortterm. If you and your agent are smart, you can parlay a Masters win into sweeter appearance fees and endorsements for an entire season. Win the US PGA Championship in August, and those same marketing dollars have already been spent. And the people who'd write the cheques are on holidays by then.

Winning a major leads to seriously bigger contracts if people expect you to win another.

And in case you haven't already figured it out, my name isn't Justin Rose or Adam Scott.



#### Kiwi Women Lead the World

#### Patsy Hankins creates history with R&A membership

IWI Patricia 'Patsy' Hankins recently accepted an invitation by The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews to be one of the first female ordinary members.

Hankins may not be a household name to ordinary Australian and New Zealand golfers, but she has long been a trailblazer in the administration of the amateur game in New

Zealand. Her tireless work behind the scenes has now been recognised by the historic Home of Golf.

Previously a male bastion, the club's general committee voted last September to invite and accept up to 15 'ordinary' female members. Hankins is among the first to be invited.

Hankins is the only woman invited from the Asia-Pacific region, joining other women golf leaders from the UK, the US, Canada and Germany. These include former Canadian Women's Golf president Diane Dunlop-Hébert, and former English amateur champion Lady Angela Bonallack (wife of a former secretary of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, Sir Michael Bonallack).

Much publicity has been given

to seven prominent women who also recently accepted invitations to honorary memberships of the club. These include Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, Dame Laura Davies, Renée Powell, Belle Robertson, Lally Segard, Annika Sorenstam and Louise Suggs.

Though Australian born, Hankins [inset] has lived most of her life in New Zealand, and is a former board member of Women's Golf New Zealand and the first president-elect of the amalgamated New Zealand Golf Inc. when it formed in 2005.

With a handicap of 12.5, Hankins is currently serving as Women's Chairman on the International Golf Federation Administrative Committee.

One of the most positive and enthusiastic people involved



in the sport, a champion of the women's game, she just wants to people to play and enjoy the game that has given her so much. We say, well done Patsy – enjoy your new club.

» IN FEBRUARY New Zealand professional Lydia Ko was again recognised by her country's sporting fraternity, taking out the top women's sports award at the Halberg Sports Awards for her achievements in 2014.

For the second consecutive year, she edged out the likes of world champions Valerie Adams, Lisa Carrington and Emma Twigg.

Now world No.1, Ko [*left*] finished 2014 second in the rankings, with wins in three LPGA Tour events and top of the season-long order of merit.

It seems a lifetime ago that Ko was first noticed on the women's amateur scene with an entry into the 2004 NZ Women's Stroke Play as an eight-year-old. In fact, 2014 was her rookie year as a professional, after a special age dispensation was granted to allow her to turn professional.

Every time the 18-year-old tees up she sets records, with a current tally of 21 top-10 finishes in only 14 months as a professional, and five LPGA wins.

Like Hankins, Korean-born Ko has spent most of life in New Zealand and she's definitely ours!

These two women are an inspiration to golfers, particularly to junior girls. Watch out world – we are leading the women's game.

**Denise Langdon** is the Director of PaR nz Golfing Holiday, based in Auckland.

IMAGE SUPPLIED • KO: GETTY IMAGE



# Caption this!

How would you caption this photo of Chelsea SES officer Phil Wall in the firing line of Australasian Golf Club secretary John Martin's drive? Send your entry to golfdig@newslifemedia.com.au and we'll publish the best one in our next issue. Get thinking!

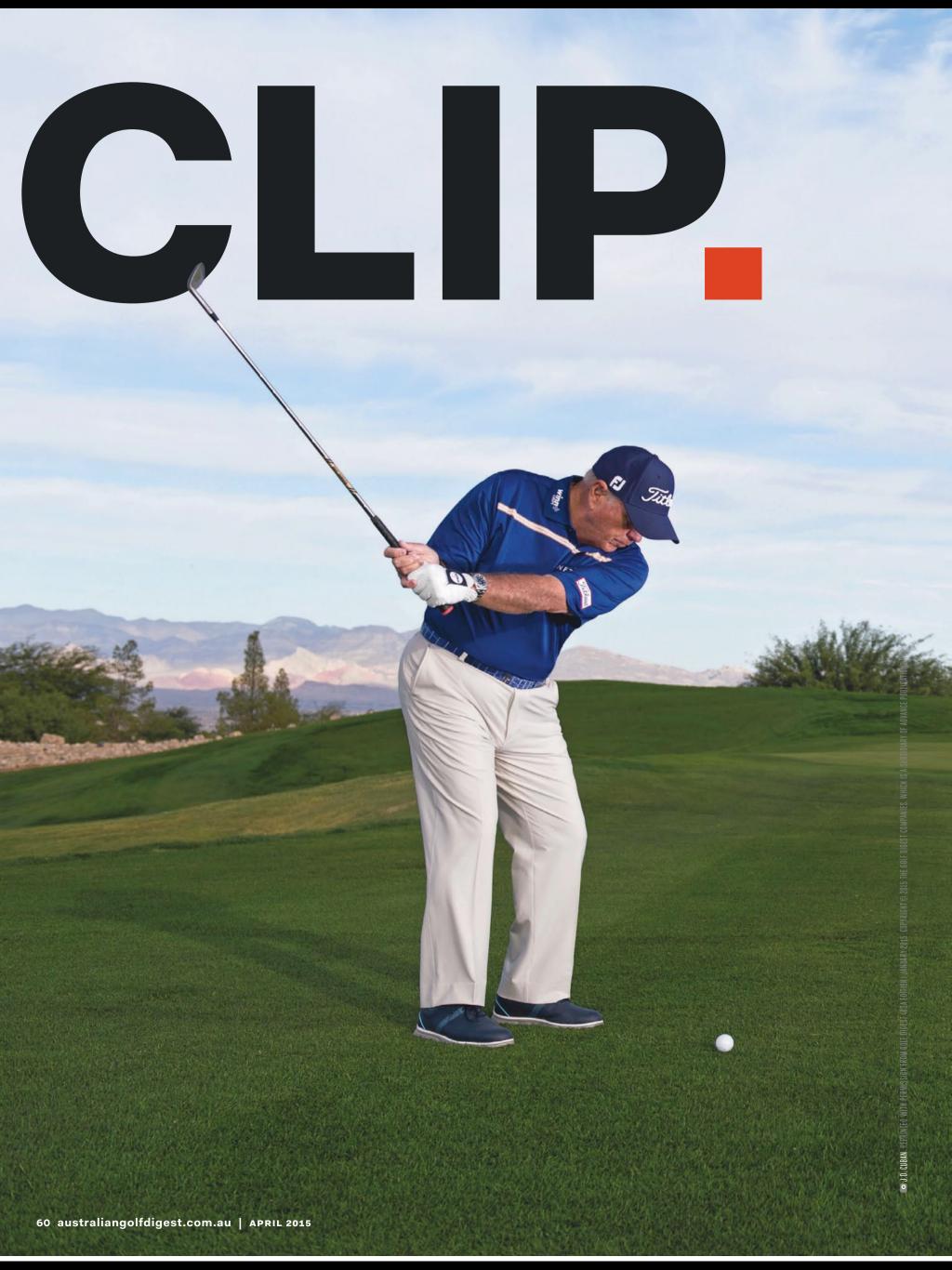
#### NEED A NEW FAIRWAY WOOD?

This issue's caption winner will win a Cobra Bio Cell fairway wood worth \$229, courtesy of our friends at Cobra-PUMA Golf.



### "Hey Rickie, did you see where Tiger went?"

Congratulations to our March issue winner David Slade on this funny take on Rory McIlroy and Rickie Fowler looking lost at the Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship. Your new Cobra Bio Cell fairway is on its way!



#### 2 BASIC SHOTS YOU NEED TO GET UP AND DOWN...

#### THE CLIP: SWING BACK WIDE AND TURN THROUGH

▶ From 30 or 40 metres out in the fairway, you want to clip the ball off the turf, not take a big divot. You don't need to make a wristy swing or try to help the ball up. It's more of a sweeping action. The way you set up will create the right angle into the ball at impact. Using your sand wedge, centre the ball in your stance, and set more weight on your front, which pre-sets a downward hit. From there, extend your arms back and let your wrists hinge naturally. No need to add hinge. Coming down, feel like your hands stay right in front of your body as you turn through. You want to skid the bottom of the club along the ground and leave a little bruise in the grass. Give the ball room to hop twice and check up.

#### THE CHIP: LAND THE BALL JUST ONTO THE GREEN

▶ There's no excuse for screwing up a straightforward chip from the fringe. The swing is so simple, it's mostly about picking the right club and getting into a good setup. I'll chip with anything from a lob wedge to a 6-iron. You want to use the club that will carry the ball just onto the green so it gets rolling right away. For the setup, here's an easy way to remember it: Ball back, hands forward, weight forward. Step in with your back foot first, directly in line with the ball, then set the clubface square behind it, then position your front foot. Lean everything a touch towards the target, and swing your arms back and through. If you turn your body through with your arms, you won't chunk these little chips.



# CHOP.

#### ... AND 2 SPECIALTY SHOTS FROM THE ROUGH

#### THE CHOP: BURY THE HEEL WITH A STEEP SWING

▶ If your ball is sitting down in greenside rough, you have no choice but to chop it out. You have to create a steep angle into the ball, which comes from making a steep backswing. With your most lofted wedge, open the clubface, position the ball in the middle of your stance and put more weight on your front foot. Grip a little tighter with your top hand (the left hand for righties) so you can power through the grass. Going back, feel as if you hinge the club straight up with your wrists. Then, keeping your weight forward, pull the club down. It's OK to hit it a touch fat, just make sure the heel of the club leads the toe to the ball. It's a crisp chop with a firm top hand and very little follow-through.

#### THE FLOP: SLIDE THE FACE UNDER THE BALL

▶ Sometimes you need to loft the ball and drop it dead on the green—that's the flop shot. First off, don't try it unless you have a good lie, because the clubface has to slide under the ball. Take your most lofted wedge, turn the face open, then grip with your top hand so your thumb is straight down the handle. That's a weak grip and will help you keep loft on the clubface at impact. Play the ball forward, and take a wider stance because you're making a bigger swing. The motion should be long and lazy – think Freddie Couples or Ernie Els – and commit to following through. Hit an inch behind the ball and slide the face under it. Once you get this shot down, you can do anything around the greens.





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# THENEXT



# BIGTHING



A teenager ready to take on the world... one shot at a time. By Rohan Clarke • Photographed by Richard Hatherly



PPEARANCES CAN BE DECEIVING.
The infectious smile that accompanies

Minjee Lee on the golf course belies the reality of a young woman who is determined to leave her mark on women's professional golf. ▶ Speaking to the media on the eve of this year's Women's Australian Open, Lee declared her intention to be the world's best golfer. "It might be a long way away, or it might not be, but world No.1 is where any golfer wants to get to. I still want to be world No.1, but I'm going to take one step at a time." ▶ It's a bold statement for an 18-year-old in the infancy of a professional career. Standing in her way is the current world No.1, the phenomenal Lydia Ko from New Zealand. There is a conveyer belt of talent coming out of Korea, and Lee has a rival on the Australian front in the form of Su Oh − the Melbourne teenager who won this summer's Australian Ladies Masters.

Anecdotes abound about Lee's commitment to golf. She has been known to spend her daylight hours practising at the golf course, while she has also embarked on a relentless strength and conditioning program.

If the Perth teenager maintains her current status as Australia's second-ranked female golfer, she will be on the plane to Rio for the 2016 Olympics and be mentioned in the same breath as Adam Scott, Jason Day and Karrie Webb. To be considered in such illustrious company is why astute followers of Australian golf think that Minjee Lee is 'The Next Big Thing'.

"Minjee really excites me," says former player turned commentator Sandra Mackenzie. "She's one of those players that can really turn it on and go seriously low and just enjoy every second of it. She's fun to watch and she's

going to be a really super-exciting player of the future.

"There is absolutely no doubt that she will be going for that No.1 spot. But unfortunately she's got an incredibly talented 17-year-old from New Zealand ahead of her at the moment."

#### A gap year to remember

N 2014, Lee convinced many observers she could be a force in the women's game. She successfully defended her Australian Women's Amateur title, finished second at the Australian Ladies Masters, led the Women's Australian Open through three rounds and beat the pros to win the Women's Victorian Open by six strokes.

Overseas, Lee finished in the top 25 in the three of the five majors in women's golf. She was the only amateur to compete at

the International Crown, which was restricted to 32 players from the eight participating nations.

The Royal Fremantle member turned professional in September, the day after propelling Australia to an unlikely victory in the World Amateur Team Championships in Japan. Lee shot 64-65 in the final two rounds to lead Australia to just its third Espirito Santo Trophy in 50 years.

For the next two months, Lee set her sights on securing an LPGA Tour card at final qualifying school in Florida. She comfortably got her card, finishing co-medallist in the fourround event. After beginning the year ranked 391st in the world, Lee had climbed to No.78 on the official women's ranking.

After just three events of the 2015 LPGA Tour season, Lee had accumulated \$64,528 with finishes of 12th, 27th and a tie

for seventh in the Women's Australian Open at Royal Melbourne, where she was leading Australian in her first tournament on home soil as a pro.

Understandably, that performance left her in a buoyant mood. She had appeared on tournament billboards and been bombarded by media requests. Lee rebounded from a slow start to make the cut, and then rallied over the weekend to post a top-10 finish.

After Sunday's final round she contemplated the future, saying: "I'm just starting, so I feel like I'm in a really good place and I just want to build from here." She repeated her long-term goal of getting to world No.1, but conceded the short-term focus is getting into the world's top 30 and retaining her LPGA card. "But I really just want to have a good learning experience this year and get everything sorted and settled on tour. I want to learn as much as I can."

#### The whole package

IVEN Lee's impressive amateur record, it wasn't a surprise she made the leap into the professional ranks so soon. But somewhat of a surprise was that IMG, the global sports management company founded by the late Mark McCormack, had earmarked her for stardom.

That the pre-eminent sports management company targeted Lee says something about her appeal. IMG doesn't manage just anybody; in the women's game, it cherry picks the most marketable talent, such as Lydia Ko, Michelle Wie and Paula Creamer. What these players have in common is a capacity to transcend the game of golf and appeal to a mainstream audience. For an Australian teenager to be considered in the



same bracket is an enormous sign of faith.

"We believe Minjee is going to be a superstar on and off the golf course, which is obviously one of the reasons we made her our No.1 recruitment priority early last year," said Kevin Hopkins, her American-based agent at IMG.

Lee's infectious smile, polite manner and golf potential have seen sponsors clamouring onto the bandwagon. Such was the warm reception from the corporate marketplace that Lee had equipment, apparel and corporate deals in place by the time she teed it up on the LPGA Tour in January. Lee's Korean heritage played a part in inking a trio of endorsement deals with prestigious North Asian companies.

"What's she not got going for her?" asks Mackenzie. "She's a gorgeous girl. She's fun. An amazing golfer. She's the whole

package . . . She's the type of player that sponsors would be flocking to."

Lee's major contract is with Hana Financial Group, which is emblazoned across her cap while Hana Bank appears on her shirt. (Hana Bank was selected as the "Best Private Bank in Korea" earlier this year for the eighth time in the past 11 years.)

She wears Descente and its distinctive insignia, shaped like an upside-down trident. (Japan's third-largest sports gear company last year surpassed Mizuno in market capitalisation for the first time in 30 years, which was largely attributable to its fast-growing South Korean business.) Srixon adorns Lee's golf bag, which is a natural fit because she has used equipment from the Japanese manufacturer since her time as a member of Golf Australia's national squad.

"What does Minjee Lee not have going for her? She's a gorgeous girl. She's fun. An amazing golfer. She's the whole package... She's the type of player that sponsors would be flocking to."

- Sandra Mackenzie

#### A fierce competitor

LTIMATELY, golfers are judged on results. Lee's Perth-based coach Ritchie Smith was reluctant to make any performancebased predictions at the start of 2015 (in terms of number of wins or world ranking). But he did say she wouldn't miss a cut all year. It's Lee's never-give-up-attitude that impresses people.

"I think she's such a great little competitor," says former LPGA player turned commentator Jane Crafter. "Every facet of her game is solid, but she has no fear. She controls her emotions very well, she's a great competitor and she knows how to win. Really, when you've been winning at such a young age, it's going to set you in good stead for the rest of your professional career."

Lee's competitiveness was on display in the final of the 2014 Australian Women's Amateur at Adelaide's Grange Golf Club. After turning 2 up against Karis Davidson through 18 holes, Lee went on a birdie barrage to leave her 15-year-old opponent reeling. Even when she was on the verge of a decisive 6&5 victory, Lee never took her foot off the throttle.

Nearing the end, Davidson had a 15-inch putt to halve a hole. The match referee, Golf Australia chairman John Hopkins, called the hole as halved, expecting the putt to be conceded. Much to his astonishment, Lee turned and said, "I didn't give her that putt!"

Lee relented and gave the putt. But it left Hopkins feeling somewhat embarrassed from having called the result early: "I would have expected her to have conceded it. But not Minjee, she was out to win as quickly as she could. A fierce competitor - in a very nice way."

Perhaps it's in the genes. Both her parents have a strong association with sport. Her mother, Clara, is an accomplished golfer and was a licensed golf instructor in Korea. She played pennants at Royal Fremantle. Her father, Soonam, an automotive spray painter and panel beater, is a single-figure golfer and graduated with a physical education degree at university.

Speaking about her daughter, Clara reveals that she never had to force Minjee to practise golf. It's a contrast to her son Minwoo, a scratch golfer who has the talent but not the drive of his older sister. "I don't have to push her so much," says Clara. "She was very disciplined, even studying. Whatever she did, she was very determined."

#### Dedicated to fitness

HAT separates Lee from other top golfers is her dedication to golfspecific fitness, which began when she started attending national training camps run by Golf Australia at the age of 15. Back home in Perth, she would visit the gym, by herself, three mornings a week before school. "I like keeping in shape," says Lee. "I'm really strict on working out and eating healthy. Don't eat McDonald's and lollies."

Lee now has a four-year fitness base from continuous training, only missing a session for a special occasion like Christmas Day. That's admirable self-discipline for somebody so young says Luke Mackey, a strength and conditioning trainer at the Victorian Institute of Sport.

A big challenge came when Lee broke her ankle in a golf cart accident three years ago. Rather than suffering an emotional letdown from being unable to swing a club, Lee spent eight weeks devoted purely to improving her body/posture. She hasn't had a single hiccup since.

"Minjee's almost bulletproof in the way that she's been able to prepare herself for tour-level golf," Mackey says. "When she travels, she is very fanatical about using spiky balls, foam rollers or stretching and also a Ramsay (McMaster) posture belt. And she uses that every single day, preher in the locker room doing her Ramsay-belt drills, not giving a s--- what anyone else thinks of what she looks like."

From a numbers' perspective, Lee has 'squatted' 80kg and 'deadlifted' 100kg. The impressive part about that is that Lee weighs 56-59kg. So in terms of relative strength, that is one-and-a-half times body weight for a back squat and nearly two times body weight for a deadlift. Impressive from a power/weight ratio, regardless of the sport.

While the game of golf doesn't necessarily require that type of physical strength, the figures illustrate Lee is a worldclass athlete. "She

bе

would

around," Mackey says. "Pound for pound, I don't think there would be anyone else able to lift as much weight or squat as much weight as what she does.

"There would be a few girls out there who might be able to ride their bike faster or run faster over a longer period of time. But her postural control and strength is by far and away at the elite level."

In her 2014 gap year, Lee played almost 30 events and so she had to be consistently training in order to be tournament ready for a sudden invitation to play somewhere at two weeks' notice. It's been drummed into her at an early age that golfers don't know which week is going to be their

> week to win. So they've got to be prepared whenever the opportunity presents itself.

has an advantage over her competitors, according to Mackey. "Her training regime wouldn't be looked upon as being any less to any of the Olympians that are getting ready for next year." It would be a remarkable feat if Lee could join them just 23

to injury prevention, building

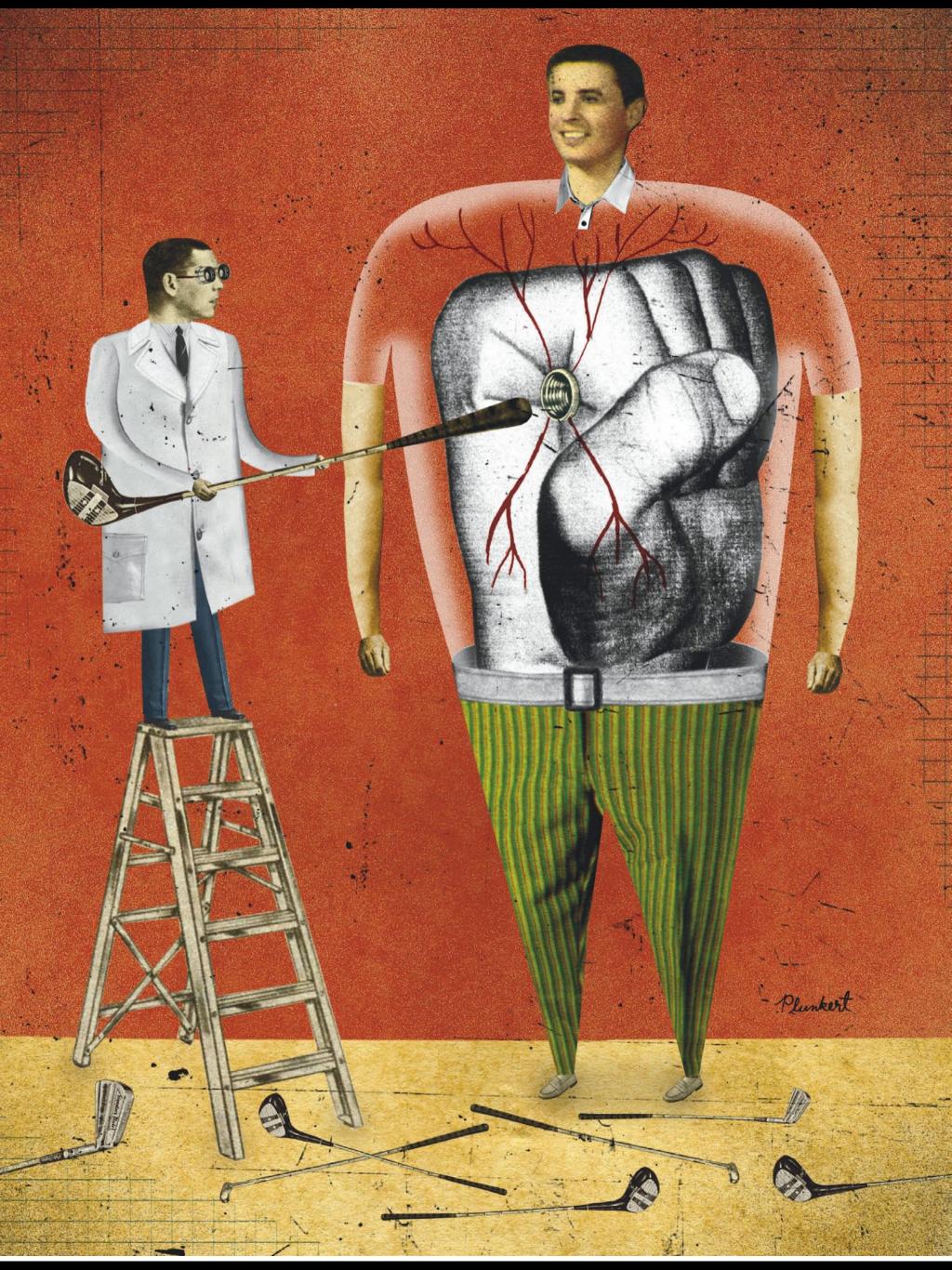
strength and endurance, and

being tournament ready, Lee

months after turning professional. As a matter of contrast, the journey for Webb to become an Olympian will present itself in her 23rd year as a pro.

She wears a constant smile on her face and exhibits a carefree attitude on the golf course. But appearances can be deceiving. Lee personifies the metaphor of a duck - appearing to glide





# RIGHT RIGHT

Tailoring your clubs to your swing can help you realise your potential.

By Evin Priest

OLF CLUB FITTING HAS EVOLVED, alot. The days of simply picking up a club off the rack and taking it straight to the course are as far behind us as horse-drawn carts, hickory

shafts and mashies. A club length tailored to your height is absolutely essential. But now golfers are also aware of the importance of a clubhead that will deliver their optimum 'smash factor', a shaft flex and weight best suited to their swing speed and a combination of all the above that will achieve the launch angle, dynamic loft and spin rate that's going to lower their scores. While different clubfitters offer different services, there's a consensus among golfers who have been correctly fitted – improvements in their game they didn't know were

possible. That's not to say you don't need lessons ... we all do. But with the swing you have now, it's possible to hit the ball a little straighter, a little longer and a little better. Getting fitted is no longer a matter of *if*, but *where*? Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

AUSTRALIA'S BEST CLUBFITTERS







#### TaylorMade Performance Lab

WHAT makes a fitting at TaylorMade's state-of-the-art Performance Lab [above] so unique is the 3D motion capture technology it uses to fit golfers. It's so advanced that the same gear was used to create the box office hit "The Matrix". The exclusive MAT-T (Motion Analysis Technology by TaylorMade) was previously available only to US PGA Tour professionals such as Jason Day, Sergio Garcia and Paula Creamer, but now the 90-minute fitting experience is available to TaylorMade customers. The custom fit is thorough and includes driver, fairway woods, hybrids, irons, wedges, and putter.

MAT-T allows TaylorMade to analyse a golfer and their clubs throughout the entire swing in measurements as fine as a tenth of a degree. The 3D images are then viewed in motion from all angles, where the clubfitters analyse the readings and data to build a set of clubs around that swing.

TaylorMade's product and experiential manager, Darryn Lowe, says getting fitted for a new set of clubs is "absolutely essential" to getting the most out of your swing and the technology you're paying for.

"The products on the market are designed with so much technology to help the golfer but, in most cases, golfers are not fully utilising these technologies to their advantage," says Lowe. "Your ball flight can be dramatically improved by using a club designed for your individual swing; your swing may not only be the reason why the ball is hit off target, the club can also be at fault and most of the time is. TaylorMade's Performance Lab eliminates that possibility."

Location: Queensland – Skygate, Brisbane Airport. Victoria – The Melbourne Golf Academy, Dandenong Rd, Heatherton. taylormadeperformancelab.com.au

## DID YOU KNOW?

The TaylorMade Performance Lab utilises 3D motion capture technology called MAT-T (Motion Analysis Technology by TaylorMade) — the same used to create movies such as The Matrix [below], Planet of the Apes, King Kong, Batman, Lord of the Rings, Polar Express and EA Sports video games.



#### AUSTRALIA'S BEST CLUBFITTERS

# 429m

The longest recorded drive REMAX Long Drive Champ Tim Burke has ever hit. The beauty of clubfitting and launch monitor technology is it allows manufacturers to record mind-blowing statistics such as Burke's 251 km/h swing speed and ball speed of 366 km/h.



#### Drummond Golf MiMatch

MiMatch [below] is Drummond Golf's in-house clubfitting system, offering golfers the benefit of Drummond's technology and independence in a short, 30-minute session. Product

manager Kean Chai believes the inclusion of the cost of MiMatch in the shelf price is what sets it apart from other fitting services.

"The golfer isn't paying for an expensive fitting service when he or she comes to Drummond because MiMatch is included free in the price of the clubs on

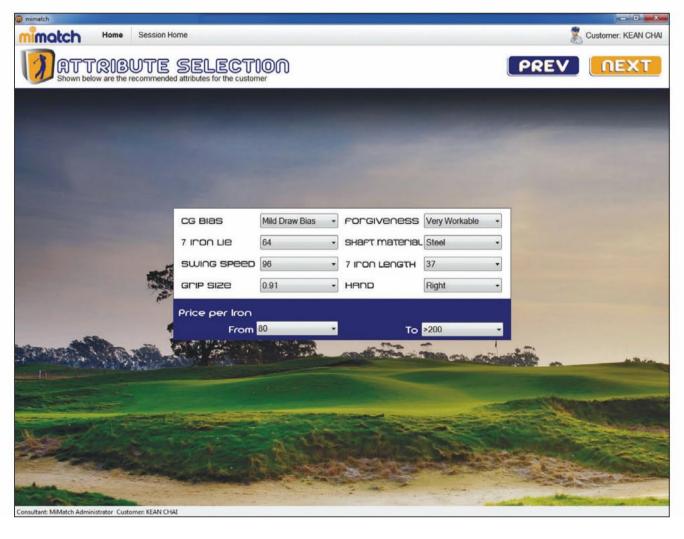
the shelf," says Chai. "We qualify the customer by asking how often and where they play; we measure their height, reach and finger length; check the lie angle they need and then integrate those results with the clubhead speed, dispersion of the golf ball, spin rates and shot pattern readings measured by our launch monitor."

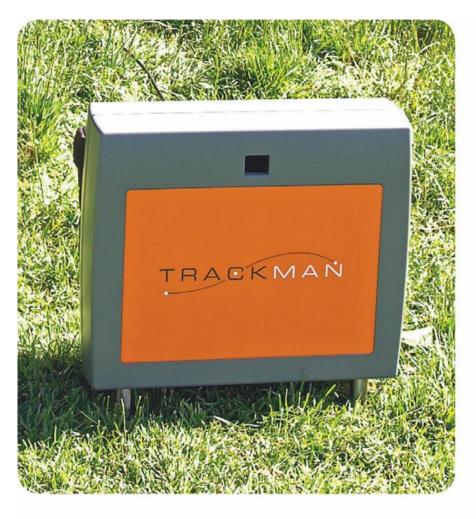
Chai says Drummond's independence and its use of Foresight GC2 launch monitors also benefit the golfer.

"We take the unique characteristics of a golfer and compare them against all the leading brands. It's a non brandbiased system, which means we're not trying to steer golfers to any particular manufacturer.

"All of the brands except Nike will come up in the system. Foresight GC2 is the best indoor fitting system available as it's a camera-based system rather than a radar system. With radar, you need the flight of the ball to predict how far it'll go; it needs a certain amount of space between the strike and the end point. With a camera-based system that sits on the side of the ball, it's easier and more accurate to predict the ball flight indoors."

Location: Stores Australia wide drummongolf.com.au





'Outdoor fittings put the best-suited clubs in the hands of customers... Without the results of gear effect, cause and turf interaction readings, you will not be getting accurate data'

- Zane Navie, Cool Clubs

#### **Cool Clubs**

COOL Clubs has 14 sites in three countries and, like Drummond Golf, isn't affiliated with any manufacturer - so you're going to be recommended the clubs that best suit your game. What's more, custom sets are ready within 10 days from the date of order.

Cool Clubs began in the golf equipment hotbed of Arizona and have now expanded their business Down Under. While Cool Clubs Australia receives all the latest technological advancements from America, co-owner and director of fitting, Zane Navie, says the software Cool Clubs have developed inhouse puts them at the forefront of the clubfitting game. This includes what Navie claims to be the "world's most accurate shaft measurement device."

"We introduced Cool Clubs' S3 Shaft Simulation machine at this year's PGA Show in Orlando and thus unveiled the world's most accurate shaft measurement device," says Navie. "Over the past year or so, we've been compiling millions of data points over thousands of shafts and can now compare every measurement of a golf shaft independently and from an impartial view. This data has proved so popular that many shaft manufacturers are already relying on it for their shaft specifications."

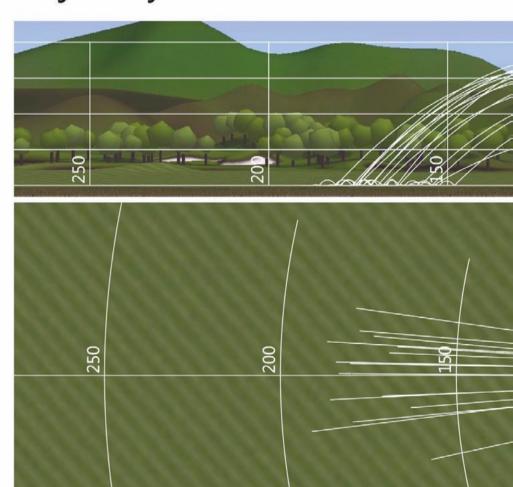
Navie says the use of Trackman launch monitor [above] technology and outdoor fittings put the best-suited clubs in the hands of customers.

"Our results are backed up by Trackman data and all our fittings have an outdoor component where we hit Titleist Pro V 1 golf balls from actual turf. If you're not doing this you are wasting your time; without the results of gear effect, cause and turf interaction readings, you will not be getting accurate data.

"For putting, we use motion analysis from military-based technology, a laser alignment system and eight high speed cameras."

Location: QLD - Sanctuary Cove, New South Wales - coming soon. coolclubsoz.com.au

#### **Trajectory**



SPIN RATE

ATTACK ANG.

**CLUB PATH** 

BALL SPEED

124.6

**CLUB SPEED** 

#### **PureForm**

PUREFORM (formerly Pure Performance Golf Labs) are one of the most talked-about fitters in the industry, having cracked the ultra competitive market of Florida, Michigan and Mexico before being introduced to Aussie golfers in 2014.

PureForm uses Trackman, advanced fitting software [below] and high-speed cameras to accurately measure a customer's current equipment, in order to find the best combination from 30,000 fitting options.

The best thing about a fitting

**AUSTRALIA'S BEST CLUBFITTERS** 

at PureForm is you don't have to wait - director of clubfitting, Paul Jenner (PGA) and his team are able to fit and build a custom set in six hours. PureForm also uses SST Pure Shaft Alignment system. used widely on the US PGA Tour to provide the shaft most suited to a particular swing. "Getting the right shaft is so important for consistency and making sure your best and worst shots aren't far apart, so it's easy to choose the right club for a shot," says Jenner. Location: NSW - Alexandria, Sydney. VIC - Sandringham Golf Academy pureformgolf.com

Evin Priest | 31 Oct 2014



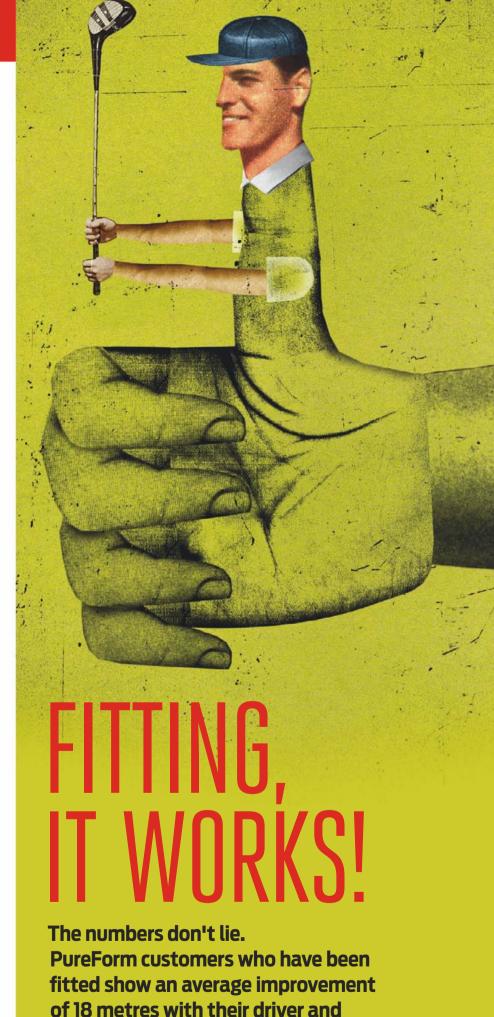


LAUNCH ANG. DYN. LOFT HEIGHT CARRY TOTAL SIDE LAND. ANG. 17.1 31.0 167.5 176.8 O.OR 46.6 20.9

TRACKMAN



12m with their irons.









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**Iron lofts are deceiving**. Pay more attention to the height of the ball's trajectory.





CALLAWAY APEX

HOT The Apex has a classic look but with the forgiveness golfers in this category need. The two-piece forged design, with a Carpenter 455 face plate, offers distance without compromising sound and feel. The long irons have tungsten in the sole to help you get the ball in the air.

NOT A 2013 iron might get overlooked among the new models.

COMMENTS (L) When you hit them, you can't feel it, but the ball rockets off the face. (M) The long irons are really easy to hit.



CALLAWAY XR

HOT If the Apex is designed for the better player in this category, the XR is for those looking for plenty of help. The offset is comforting without being a visual distraction, and the face cup (normally reserved for metalwoods) will give some golfers a distance boost they didn't think existed.

**NOT** If you need to shape a shot, the offset will make it difficult.

**COMMENTS** (M) I love the rounded look, and the turf interaction was among the best I tested.



CLEVELAND
CG BLACK CB
HOT Cleveland makes
quality clubs for all kinds

of players, and this iron is a terrific example. The 4 through 7-iron have a high-strength steel face for more ball speed, and the centre of gravity is towards the heel to help close the face; exactly what a player in this category needs. NOT When you set the 4-iron down, you can see some of the back at address. Not ideal. **COMMENTS** (L) The UST Recoil shaft is light like graphite but feels like it has the stability of steel.



COBRA FLY-Z

HOT We love the Fly-Z for its innovative features at a competitive price. The deep undercut has multiple benefits, including the creation of a large, unsupported face that produces lots of spring at impact. The groove story makes sense, too: less aggressive on the 3 through 6-iron and more aggressive on the short irons where spin and precision are needed. **NOT** Some clubs in this category get a lift from tour usage. Don't expect Fly-Z to be one of them.

**COMMENTS** (M) All the technology is hidden at address, and the ball pops off the face. It produces a crisp thud at impact, too.



MIZUNO JPX-850

HOT Mizuno shows gameimprovement savvy by producing an iron where the centre of gravity is lower than the JPX-825. The lower CG is closer to where everyday players hit the ball: low on the face. The dual-relief sole can plow through the thickest rough your superintendent can grow.

NOT Mizuno has three

irons in this category. That's not only confusing it's frustrating.

comments (L) Not really a shotmaker's club, but if you need distance it's a good way to go. (M) On the feel spectrum, it's far from Mizuno's history of buttery feeling clubs. It's firmer.



MIZUNO JPX-850 FORGED

**HOT** Typically, forged clubs are made from carbon steel. But for this JPX-850 Mizuno uses boron-infused steel - a material that's 30 per cent stronger than carbon steel. This allows for a thinner face and faster ball speeds. It also permits a cavity design where weight is pushed to the perimeter to increase forgiveness, Mizuno's expansive custom options are worth exploring, too. NOT This is on the betterplayer side of game improvement. Make sure you have enough game before you buy. **COMMENTS** (M) Love the

**COMMENTS** (M) Love the chrome-on-chrome look. Very classy.



MIZUNO MP-H5

**HOT** Mizuno rarely overhauls an iron model, choosing instead to make meaningful tweaks. On this club that means a thinner topline and a shorter blade length (versus the MP-H4). The 3 through 6-iron have a stainless-steel frame. a hollow body and a thin maraging-steel face insert for maximum springlike effect. And for you masochists out there, the company offers a forged "Hitogami" 1-iron, too. NOT Sorry, left-handers. You're out of luck.

**COMMENTS** (M) The turf interaction is excellent for a wider-soled iron. The distance consistency from shot to shot is impressive.



NIKE VAPOR SPEED

**HOT** Nike took a metalwood approach when designing this iron, and we admire the effort and execution. In clubs down to the 7-iron, a face made of high-strength steel alloy has been slimmed down to just 2.7 millimetres in the centre and even thinner (2.2 mm) on the outside. The thin face adds zip to your ball speed and allows weight to be positioned low and back to help get the ball in the air quicker. NOT The 3-iron is 39.75 inches long. That's almost a 1-iron length.

a 1-iron length.

COMMENTS (M) There is a lightweight feel to these that makes them nearly effortless to swing.



**HOT** The G-series iron

PING G30

line has been around for more than a decade, but it gets a fresh update with the G30. The lofts are stronger than the previous G25, and the sole contours and the bounce profiles more closely match the i25 players iron. Why? To prevent digging into the ground and keep it moving on its path through the turf. Also, don't overlook the value of the stock CFS Distance shaft. NOT This is not the prettiest-looking club in the address position. **COMMENTS** (L) The weight in the head helps you get through the ball without overswinging.



TAYLORMADE

**HOT** If you're using players irons even though you're having trouble getting out of the first round of the club championship, these make that transition to game-improvement easier to stomach. Instantly noticeable are the vertical face slots, which produce a springboard at impact. Less visible is the thin face - the thinnest ever on a TaylorMade iron. The result: a distance iron in a pleasing shape NOT With the thin face

NOT With the thin face comes a slight loss of feel. COMMENTS (L) The face has more slots than a casino, but there is nice consistency. I had the same ball contact every time.



AP1

HOT If you're a former single-digit struggling to break 80, these will have appeal. The topline is generous without being bulky, and the tungsten in the toe of the long irons is useful in getting the ball airborne. The narrow sole in the short irons raises the centre of gravity to produce a flatter trajectory. That's the kind of stuff serious golfers take seriously.

**NOT** The Tour Velvet is a good grip, but perhaps something a little snazzier is in order.

COMMENTS (H) It doesn't look forgiving, but it is. My fat shots reached the front of the green instead of coming up short.



SRIXON Z545

**HOT** It doesn't wow you with a lot of visible technology, but that doesn't mean the horsepower isn't real. The face insert is SUP10 steel. a material developed for car engines, that's 10 per cent stronger than traditional 17-4 steel. The long and middle irons make use of tungsten in the toe to position the centre of gravity more in line with the centre of the face for even more metres. NOT The smallish head could intimidate those looking for help.

COMMENTS (M) You might need a highlaunching angle of attack to get it off the ground, but if you do, it's plenty hot.



TOUR EDGE
EXOTICS E8

**HOT** When Exotics calls something its "most advanced," you take notice. The irons have the deepest undercut cavity of any previous Exotics model to produce faster ball speeds. Tungsten weights low in the heel and toe provide the kind of forgiveness that saves strokes. You have to love the sticker price, too. NOT This club has too much going on in the back and, unfortunately, you see quite a bit of it in the address position. **COMMENTS (H) A** powerful flight. Short irons are a club longer than others.

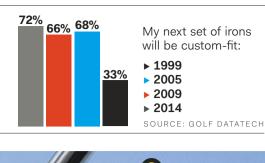
🖸 AL MURPHY



FOR DETAILS ON HOW YOU CAN BE MADE OF GREATNESS CHECK OUT OUR FITTING AND DEMO CALENDER AT WWW.TAYLORMADEGOLF.COM.AU/FITTING-DEMOS, OR VISIT YOUR LOCAL AUTHORISED STOCKIST.









Read your divots. Unless the depth is the same from heel to toe, your lie angle might be off.



**CALLAWAY APEX PRO** 

**HOT** The Apex Pro has all the good traits that better players want. The head is forged from 1020 carbon steel and features a polymer insert in the back to dampen any vibration from the thin face. The long irons have tungsten sole weights to help you get shots airborne more easily. NOT The topline might be a tad thick for purists. COMMENTS (L) The feedback you get through the hands is outstanding, and for a bigger head, you can hit a lot of different shots.



COBRA FLY-Z+

**HOT** This is a reassuring club to have in your hands when the pressure is on. The milled undercut design (3 through 8-iron) and use of tungsten in the heel and toe (3 through 7-iron) offer extra forgiveness. Also, the five-press forging process provides consistency from club to club. NOT The D-3 swingweight might be too heavy for high-single-digit players. **COMMENTS** (M) This felt like it really had a motor in it and got a lot of distance without sacrificing feel.



**MIZUNO MP-15** 

HOT The MP-15 is a true players iron, with traditional lofts and slightly shorter shaft lengths, both of which translate to better consistency. The titanium cavity insert used in the MP-59 has been modified here, allowing Mizuno to redistribute more weight to the perimeter. The result is an expanded sweet spot with better feel. NOT The long irons aren't the most forgiving. **COMMENTS** (L) The titanium insert makes it feel like it has a turbo-



**MIZUNO** MP-54

**HOT** Consumers expect a certain level of quality from Mizuno, and the company doesn't disappoint here. The milled, deep pocket cavity on the 3 through 7-iron allowed designers to redistribute 16 grams to improve launch angle and centre-hit feel. The short irons have a muscle-back design for workability. NOT A stock shaft lighter than True Temper's Dynamic Gold might be a better choice

**COMMENTS** (L) I love how the narrow, beveled sole interacts with the turf.



**NIKE VAPOR PRO COMBO** 

**HOT** This is a thoughtful method for improving centre-of-gravity location without forgetting about the other things better players crave. By shifting weight towards the toe, the CG is positioned at the centre of the face. A thin, high-strength steel face insert through the 7-iron maximises distance. **NOT** The Volt-coloured swoosh is cool only if you have game to back it up. **COMMENTS** (M) The ball really sizzled, and the trajectory cut through the wind with ease.



**PING** 

**HOT** Some irons are built for tour-level games, but this one is designed for Everyman. The progressive CG location is lower on the long irons to help launch the ball and higher on the short irons to keep the flight down. This produces a comfortable players iron that lacks the intimidation factor of a pure blade. NOT The offset and head size might be too much for low-handicappers. **COMMENTS** (M) The sweet spot feels like it runs from heel to toe. The most user-friendly iron in this category. The thump at impact is a sound of



PING

**HOT** The S55 strikes a nice balance between traditional design and today's technology. The club is cast, but the elastomer used in the custom tuning port within the cavity provides the feel of a forged feel, Furthermore, Pina reduced the moment of inertia around the hosel (compared to the previous S56) to provide more shotshaping ability. **NOT** No advancement in the area of grooves. **COMMENTS** (L) The topline is thin, but it still

has a ton of forgiveness.



**TAYLORMADE** 

**HOT** The long irons are cast from 450 stainless steel and have tungsten toe weights, but the story is the use of slots to help the face flex (in the sole on the 3 through 7-iron and on the face in the 3 through 8-iron). Doing so creates enough ball speed to turn scrawny-arm hackers around the country into studs.

NOT The look is a little too game improvement-y. **COMMENTS** (L) Excellent ball flight: Takes off low, and rises to its apex before dropping softly.



**TAYLORMADE** 

**HOT** Vertical face slots frame the ball well at address, and the forged carbon-steel face and hosel optimise feel. The compact head and minimal offset provide a tour-level look that will make you the envy of your foursome. **NOT** The price will likely have you hiding the credit-card statement from your spouse. **COMMENTS** (L) A nice job of melding the short irons without the slots with the rest of the set and keeping



**TITLEIST AP2714** 

**HOT** No iron makes technology look as beautiful as this perennial favourite does. Tungsten

in the heel and toe make the head more stable on off-centre strikes than its tour-proven, compact size would have you believe. That shape, including a neatly bevelled trailing edge on the sole, gives you the confidence at address to play any shot. NOT Those seeking extra distance from their irons might not find it here. **COMMENTS (L) The** consistency from shot to shot is impressive.



WILSON STAFF **FG TOUR V4** 

**HOT** At one time Wilson was heralded for its betterplayer irons, and this model is worthy of that heritage. Tungsten in the centre of the sole helps shots get in the air, and additional mass behind the centre of the face produces a muscle-back sound and feel without sacrificing forgiveness.

extensive fitting options of other companies **COMMENTS** (L) Easy to turn over, hold open or sling a hook. You can hit any shot on command.

NOT Doesn't have the



**COBRA** FLY-Z PRO

**HOT** Rickie Fowler's AMP Cell Pro irons were made with a tungsten weight in the toe to shift the CG toward the centre of the face. Cobra made that the stock club with its Fly-Z Pro. The forged irons also borrow from the company's wedge line by using the same groove and face milling. Combined, they make this a set worth investigating. NOT These are so close to the AMP Cell Pro in look you might think they didn't change anything.

behind the centre seems to give shots a little boost. Even better, mis-hits kept



SRIXON

HOT Srixon is known for its success in Japan. but this iron has Aussies taking note. A doublelaser-milled face (parallel and slightly angled) provides consistent spin, especially from the rough. Its undervalued asset, however, is the Tour VT sole that increases the leading bounce and decreases the trailing bounce to help turf interaction.

NOT Misses feel like a foul ball on a cold day. **COMMENTS** (M) A lighter feel. You can speed the club through impact.



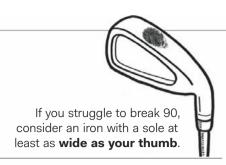
TITLEIST **CB714** 

HOT The CB 714 is a cavity-back iron forged from 1025 carbon steel that gets all the little things right. The reduced blade height in the heel (compared to the CB 712) and the consistent blade length are visually pleasing. The lofts (a 47-degree pitching wedge) are retro cool.

NOT Retro cool doesn't appeal to a wide audience. COMMENTS (M) I don't know where the feel is coming from, because there's no visible technology, but they feel like a cushy metal. Love it.









**ADAMS IDEA TECH** 

HOT In past years, a knock against Adams in this category has been the unsightly slots on the crown of the hybrids. Sure. they improve ball speed, but visually they were hard to get used to. Adams has addressed this issue with its new 'ghost slot'. Using an epoxy filler in the opening and painting over it makes the hole nearly undetectable. A cutthrough slot in the irons creates extra distance in those clubs, too. **NOT** As helpful as hybrids are, some players don't want three of them in a set. **COMMENTS** (H) You get the sensation at impact that all of the club's force is



directed into the ball.

**CALLAWAY BIG BERTHA** 

**HOT** Callaway is a good example of a company with driver technology clearly evident in its irons. Take the Big Bertha, for instance. By wrapping the perimeter of the iron's face around the topline and sole of the club, Callaway has produced a cupface; a flagship technology typically reserved for its metalwoods. This gives the hollow-constructed irons more zip across a larger portion of the face. NOT The Big Bertha is already double what some sets cost, so why charge another hundred bucks for the hybrid option? **COMMENTS** (H) Distance is plentiful with these irons. (H) Getting height with the 6-iron was as easy as with the 9-iron.



**CLEVELAND CG BLACK** 

**HOT** How do you create power when you generate little speed? That's the dilemma Cleveland tries to solve with the CG Black. The set has hollow-hybridlike long irons, two-piece middle irons (both with high-strength steel face inserts) and traditional cavity-back short irons. The idea is that golfers with slow swing speeds (less than 145 km/h) need weight on the perimeter of the longer irons for maximum forgiveness. **NOT** The lightweight feel might not appeal to golfers with faster swing speeds. **COMMENTS** (H) I like the traditional-looking middle irons. (H) Thin shots still went plenty high.



COBRA FLY-ZXL

**HOT** It's hard to believe it has been only two years since the company's Baffler hybrid set was mocked for its looks. That's because the Fly-Z XL is one of the cleaner-looking clubs in this category. However, underneath the hood is plenty of technological punch, like a hollow section low in the cavity on the 4 through 8-irons to help launch the ball high. The hollow design also means a thinner faca thus more springlike effect. NOT Cobra should've kept the hollow design throughout the set. Hackers need all the help they can get. **COMMENTS** (H) Get the

hybrids instead of the

long irons. There's a big

difference in height and distance with them.



**MIZUNO** JPX-EZ

**HOT** We all know this guy: the 19 marker who wants clubs that say he's a little better than that. This is his iron. The hybrids for the 4 through 6-iron are easy to use. The short irons have less offset and thinner soles than others in this category, making them visually pleasing without sacrificing performance. You just might look and play better than you are. **NOT** Beginners needing a lot of help should look elsewhere.

**COMMENTS** (H) It has the solid feel and crisp sound you'd expect to find in a better player's iron. (H) The turf interaction is smoother than with other models I've tried.



D200

**HOT** The large profile takes some getting used to, but there are no complaints about the feel of this club or its ability to produce good shots. Wilson's lightweight philosophy in drivers is on display here. The 59-gram **UST Elements Chrome** graphite shaft is meant to help players create more clubhead speed. In the irons, the front part of the sole is as thin as the face to provide extra forgiveness on shots struck low or thin. **NOT** There's no disquising the appearance. These irons are honkin' big. **COMMENTS** (H) Very forgiving. These do a great job of straightening out your misses. (H) There's extra distance for those who need the metres.



**TOUR EDGE HOT LAUNCH IRON-WOOD** 

**HOT** Tour Edge excels at making clubs for golfers with slow swing speeds, and this all-hybrid set is a great example. A heavy steel sole positions weight low to help you hit the ball high. The hollow, hypersteel body is welded to a maraging-steel, variablethickness face for the pop you need. There's flexibility in set makeup, too: The hybrids come in 2-hybrid through lob wedge. (That's right: a lob-wedge hybrid!) NOT The heads are hollow, and, unfortunately, they sound like it.

COMMENTS (H) Doesn't take much effort to launch the ball high with these That's the help I need.



YONEX **Z-FORCE** 

**HOT** A fact you might not know about Yonex: Phil Mickelson began his pro career playing the company's clubs. These irons, however, are made for golfers who generate a lot less clubhead speed than Phil. Specifically, 145 km/h or less (compared with Lefty's 185 km/h swing speed). The M60 graphite shaft weighs less than 60 grams in most irons, and a deep, undercut cavity helps the face flex at impact. The set runs 5-iron through sand wedge.

NOT Golfers need more help with their long irons **COMMENTS** (H) These felt soft regardless of where I hit them on the face. (H) The feeling at impact is cushion-y without feeling like mush.

### **Don't Overlook Set Makeup**

### Use all your clubs



OST tour players bring more than just 14 clubs to a tournament. The reason is that they like to experiment

during practice rounds to best match clubs to the course. But most average golfers use the same 14 clubs every round, sometimes to the detriment of their score. Understanding the right mix begins with an analysis of your game. Here are common areas to look at:

- **DRIVER:** If your course requires a lot of rightto-left tee shots, and you tend to fade the ball, you might consider a driver with draw bias, or one you can adjust.
- FAIRWAY WOODS: With its increased loft and shorter shaft length, a 4-wood might be easier to hit off the turf than a 3-wood and could replace your 3 and 5-wood, leaving room in your bag for another club.
- wedges: A fourth wedge can cure that nagging distance gap near the green.

Besides the above, don't be afraid to get creative like the pros. At last year's McGladrey Classic, nearly half the field had an iron set with at least two models of irons, mostly easier-to-hit long irons and more traditional short irons for shot-shaping.

Need help deciding on your set? Consult your local golf pro or clubfitter. They can help you put all 14 clubs to good use.



: AL MURPHY • LEFT: HARRY CAMPBELL







Which wedges do golfers carry:

- ▶ Pitching wedge
- ► Sand wedge
- ► Gap wedge
- ► Lob wedge



If you play regularly and haven't changed wedges in two years, you're basically **using a niblick**.





### CALLAWAY MACK DADDY 2

HOT For more spin and control, the grooves are cut sharper and deeper than any Callaway has made since the USGA rolled back grooves. There are also more options (20) than ever, including five new Tour Grind lofts from 52 to 60 degrees. Some will even find the straighter leading edge of the Tour Grind lofts easier to aim.

NOT Why charge \$10 more for the Tour Grind version? COMMENTS (L) It's almost easier to hit out of the sand than off the turf because it puts so much spin on the ball. That's a good problem, though. (M) Nice wide sole. You can feel that it's going to take off that top layer of sand perfectly.



### CLEVELAND 588 RTX 2.0

**HOT** Every player wants as much spin as possible on shots hit from the rough. Cleveland's idea was to sharpen its groove edges and add multiple levels of surface roughness to the space between the grooves. Three sole grinds and 18 loft options mean there's a wedge to meet just about every need, and Cleveland's wedge-fitting app helps handle the decision-making for you. NOT Laser-etching "Rotex 2.0" around the face 10 times seems excessive. **COMMENTS** (L) One of my favourite shapes in golf. The distance is predictable, and spin out of a bunker is significant. (M) It spins hard; really catchy. On full shots, the ball flight

is repeatable.



### MIZUNO MP-T5

HOT Mizuno led the trend of matching groove design to the loft on its forged wedges. The reason is spin control: more on short shots, not too much on full ones. Now the company is expanding its line to match lofts to one of five sole grinds. That includes high and low bounce options for every loft from 54 to 62 degrees.

NOT We'd like to see this same inventiveness applied to surface roughness. COMMENTS (L) It looks round through the toe; very inviting and responsive. I immediately knew about the shot I hit. (M) I like the heavy feel. The head comes through sand and rough cleanly.



PING

HOT There's more spin, and then there's more control of your spin, getting all shots to land predictably. That is Ping's smart move here: Grooves on higher lofts launch the ball lower but with maximum spin, especially from the rough. Grooves on lower lofts produce high spin on full-swing shots from dry conditions.

NOT Personalisation has become a thing in wedges. Not so much here. COMMENTS (L) The lead-

Not so much here.

COMMENTS (L) The leading edge lines up with the hosel in a way that makes it easy to manipulate the face, which looks just as good open or shut. (M)

The longer grip allows you to grip down farther. Very versatile and confidence-inspiring. I had no nerves.



### TITLEIST VOKEY DESIGN SM5

HOT The SM5 is available in 21 loft and bounce configurations on six sole grinds. It also gets creative with its grooves: The narrow grooves on the lower lofts emphasise trajectory control, and the deeper scorelines on the higher lofts are meant to produce spin from the rough.

struggle to understand the nuances of the wedge's S, M, K, F, L and T grinds.

COMMENTS (L) Consistent feel between a greenside shot and a full shot. I can't believe how soft a feel you get on chip shots. (M) It had great turf interaction. You can hit it high or low, and all the sole grinds provide versatility.



### BRIDGESTONE J15

HOT It doesn't matter how good your groove technology is if you don't make clean contact. So Bridgestone shaved an area around the heel on this forged design to help the leading edge stay tighter to the ground through impact. More important, it's built into the shape so there's no post-production grinding (meaning the geometry is consistent from wedge to wedge).

NOT One bounce option for each of its six lofts isn't broad enough.

COMMENTS (L) It felt like I could zip it back on any greenside shot. (M) There's a lot of heel relief. That really makes flop shots easier. Plus, it's effortless to lay the club open when you're in a bunker.



### CLEVELAND 588 RTX 2.0 CB

**HOT** The cavity-back construction might have a game-improvement look, but the rear stabiliser bars provide the right amount of feel. The large face and generous sole should be useful to average players, particularly on bunker shots. This wedge also features the same deep grooves and face texture as Cleveland's other RTX. **NOT** Why not make it from the same soft 8620 steel as the standard version? **COMMENTS** (L) The large

the same soft 8620 steel as the standard version?

COMMENTS (L) The large head gives me confidence at address, yet it still feels as soft as oatmeal. (M) It was effortless to hit out of the sand. I could feel the bounce pushing it through.



### FOURTEEN RM-21

HOT Fourteen emphasises distance control by seeking to maximise spin and optimise trajectory. To create more spin, the RM-21 features a wider groove than previous company models. And the upper portion of the iron is thicker behind the face to keep the ball's trajectory from ballooning.

NOT The addition of a wide-sole option for higher lofts is welcome, but we're not sure there's a need for a 42-degree model.

COMMENTS (L) The wedge has a soft feel without being spongy. It also

comments (L) The wedge has a soft feel without being spongy. It also has good control out of the sand and cuts through the rough nicely. (M) I really love the generous hitting area. What a great sound out of the bunker.



### HOPKINS

CJ-1

HOT Hopkins offers the ultimate in Web-based wedge-fitting. The CJ-1 line features 10 lofts and seven sole grinds. Don't know where to begin? Finding the right sole grind is as simple as choosing your region of the country. You can also tweak the loft, lie, grip and shaft. Custom colors and engraving are also available.

NOT We'd be even more excited if the groove design featured a cutting-edge technology story.

COMMENTS (L) The grinds are legit. Picked up one grind and didn't hit it well. Moved to a heel grind and hit it great. (M) It felt well-balanced. I knew



### NIKE ENGAGE

HOT You won't notice it, but Nike shortened the hosel by a quarter inch. This tweak allowed Nike to shift the weight more in line with the centre of the face for maximum stability. Nike believes more stability produces improved feel and consistency. Three sole shapes, plus sharper, wider grooves and a rougher blasted face complete the package.

NOT Encasing the heads in a sealant at retail (to preserve the raw finish) seems a little much. COMMENTS (L) I love the

COMMENTS (L) I love the way it hides all the technology in the bottom. At address, it looks like a normal wedge. (M) I like the head size and the raw grind. It has a vintage look, and the ball comes off the face soft.



### SCRATCH

FIT

HOT A wedge works through the turf properly only if the sole of the club is a perfect match with your swing. Scratch's well-deserved cult following is rooted in the sole design of these forged wedges. The three shapes and six sole grinds across the six lofts feature high-volume grooves.

NOT You really should be custom-fit for these sole grinds. Unfortunately, that option might be tough to find outside the company's headquarters. COMMENTS (L) It feels heavier than others, but that's good. (M) This is a great wedge for the player who likes to hit lots of different shots.



### TAYLORMADE TOUR PREFERRED

**HOT** This wedge focuses on small details to produce big benefits. For example, the leading edge is square on the lower lofts for full swings and slightly rounded on the higher lofts for better performance on open-face shots. Also, a chemical treatment on the face creates microscopic friction elements for more spin and a lower trajectory. Two sole grinds, including a restyled ATV, are available. NOT A second finish option would be nice.

comments (L) A true utility wedge. I like the satin finish. It's just a classic shape. Very compact head. It had a soft feel for a cast club. (M) I like the medium finish. No glare. It kind of has a techy look. Nice, muted sound.



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### STRIPE IT DOWN EVERY FAIRWAY WITH THE TOUR-PRO FADE BY RYAN MOORE

I'VE been a professional golfer since 2005. I've had more than 220 US PGA Tour starts, 45 top-10 finishes and three wins. Want to know how many swing changes I've made during that time? Zero. I turned pro playing a fade, and I'm still playing one now. My message to you is that hitting a draw might get you extra distance when executed correctly, but when it comes to accuracy and reliability, you're much better off fading the ball. Why? It requires a simpler, more-intuitive motion to execute than what's needed to hit a draw. Lee Trevino made a Hall of Fame career out of this shot. So if you struggle to put it in play off the tee, I'm going to show you how to fade it tour-pro style in three simple steps. Let's get to work.

### 1. SETUP ALIGN YOURSELF SLIGHTLY LEFT

To maximise distance with this left-to-right shot shape and put some reliability back into your drives, think of this as a baby fade. It will curve, just not much. Set your feet, hips and shoulders so they are aligned a hair left of your target, like I'm doing here. Your club's path should be parallel to this open alignment during the downswing and follow-through. Also, address the ball a little farther forward in your stance.

This will help you come into the ball with the clubface pointing slightly left of the target at impact. This clubface position might seem counterintuitive because you want the ball to curve back to the right of where you're aligned, but I'll explain why this matters later.

### 2. BACKSWING ROTATE WITH YOUR CORE

Slicers take the club back with their hands and arms and very little body rotation. But to hit a tour-pro fade, you should



do the opposite. Take the club back with your core muscles, and make a big shoulder turn while keeping your hands and arms relatively passive, as if they're just coming along for the ride. When you do this, the clubhead will track straight back for the first few feet, and you'll be in a much better position to swing down into the ball in the same direction you set your body lines at address. If you whip the clubhead to the inside as you start back, the tendency is to loop it way outside the target line in the downswing and slice the ball.

### 3. THROUGH-SWING KEEP YOUR BODY MOVING

Think of the downswing as a race. Your goal is to keep your body rotation ahead of the clubhead for as long as you can. If you use your legs for leverage and keep everything rotating aggressively, you'll have plenty of time for the clubface to close to the target before it strikes the ball. Remember earlier when I said the face should be pointing slightly left of the target at impact? This is the secret to

the tour-pro fade. With a swing path that's slightly more to the left than the clubface's position – in other words, an out-to-in path – you'll hit the ball solidly with a little left-to-right spin. That's what makes the shot curve back to the middle. The clubface is still slightly open (facing right) in relation to the direction of the path.

### STILL CROOKED? PICK A TARGET, AND COMMIT TO THE SWING

Here are two more tips to help: (1) Widen your stance a little.

You can generate more clubhead speed from a stable base, and this also will help shallow your swing path to reduce backspin on the ball.

Less spin means better control.

(2) Finish with your chest pointing well left of your target, as I'm showing here. If you start hitting pulls, or worse, hooks, it's probably because you stopped turning your body but your arms kept going and shut the face too much. This shot requires a full body turn.

**Ryan Moore** ranks ninth on the US PGA Tour in hitting fairways.

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**▶ BY RON SIRAK** 

# TIGER'S STILL NO.1 IN MAKING MONEY (BUTJUST BARELY)

FROM THE MOMENT TIGER WOODS stepped to a podium on August 28, 1996, with \$67 million in Nike and Titleist money in his pocket, leaned into a microphone and said, "Hello, World," he has been the highest paid golfer and one of the richest athletes on the planet. And as a rarity in an over-hyped world, he exceeded expectations.

earned on the US PGA Tour and the five international tours (Japan, European Tour, Australasian, Southern Africa, Asian) and the Champions Tour, LPGA Tour, Ladies European Tour and the Japan LPGA through December 14. It includes unofficial money won in nontour events. OFF-COURSE INCOME includes estimates of all money earned from endorsements, bonuses, appearance fees, corporate outings, speaking engagements, licence fees (video games, trading cards), course architecture, books, instructional videos and businesses that capitalise on a person's status as a player, such as product lines including clothing, wine and turfgrass. Investment income is not included.

PREVIO NAME RA		ON COURSE	OFF COURSE	TOTAL
1.Tiger Woods	1	\$610,775	\$54,500,000	\$55,110,775
2. Phil Mickelson	2	\$2,238,019	\$48,500,000	\$50,738,019
3. Rory McIlroy	6	\$14,183,976	\$35,000,000	\$49,183,976
4. Arnold Palmer	3	_	\$40,000,000	\$40,000,000
5. Jack Nicklaus	4	\$47,250	\$22,000,000	\$22,047,250
6. Billy Horschel	46	\$15,549,691	\$2,750,000	\$18,299,691
7. Justin Rose	12	\$7,228,816	\$11,000,000	\$18,228,816
8. Sergio Garcia	11	\$7,347,235	\$8,500,000	\$15,847,235
9. Adam Scott	8	\$5,756,141	\$9,500,000	\$15,256,141
10. Bubba Watson	37	\$9,361,978	\$5,750,000	\$15,111,978
11. Gary Player	7	-	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000
12. Rickie Fowler	35	\$5,880,284	\$8,750,000	\$14,630,284
13. Jim Furyk	20	\$7,822,395	\$6,250,000	\$14,072,395
14. Matt Kuchar	13	\$7,006,342	\$6,250,000	\$13,256,342
15. Ernie Els	9	\$2,368,670	\$9,950,000	\$12,318,670
16. Jordan Spieth	18	\$6,311,404	\$5,950,000	\$12,261,404
17. Greg Norman	10	\$80,000	\$12,000,000	\$12,080,000
18. Henrik Stenson	5	\$6,935,615	\$4,400,000	\$11,335,615
19. Martin Kaymer	NR	\$6,114,169	\$5,000,000	\$11,114,169
20. Bernhard Langer	36	\$4,520,314	\$5,600,000	\$10,120,314
21. Jimmy Walker	NR	\$7,184,623	\$2,450,000	\$9,634,623
22. <b>Dustin Johnson</b>	19	\$4,599,180	\$5,000,000	\$9,599,180
23. Chris Kirk	NR	\$8,271,110	\$1,300,000	\$9,571,110
24. Colin Montgomerie		\$2,969,991	\$6,500,000	\$9,469,991
25. Graeme McDowell	16	\$4,194,228	\$5,200,000	\$9,394,228
26. <b>Hunter Mahan</b>	33	\$4,510,416	\$4,450,000	\$8,960,416
27. Lee Westwood	17	\$2,641,702	\$6,250,000	\$8,891,702
28. Jason Day	29	\$6,073,741	\$2,800,000	\$8,873,741
29. Zach Johnson	24	\$4,767,584	\$4,000,000	\$8,767,584
30. Luke Donald	14	\$2,995,849	\$5,150,000	\$8,145,849
31. Keegan Bradley	21	\$3,602,138	\$4,500,000	\$8,102,138
32. Ryo Ishikawa	26	\$2,029,943	\$6,000,000	\$8,029,943
33. Tom Watson	40	\$471,690 \$1,400,607	\$7,500,000	\$7,971,690
34. Fred Couples 35. Nick Faldo	22 31	\$1,400,607	\$6,500,000 \$7,500,000	\$7,900,607 \$7,572,615
36. Hideki Matsuyama		\$4,989,820	\$2,500,000	\$7,372,013
37. Miguel A. Jimenez		\$2,480,531	\$5,000,000	\$7,489,620
38. Ian Poulter	23	\$3,659,799	\$3,750,000	\$7,400,331
39. Davis Love III	34	\$657,414	\$6,500,000	\$7,157,414
40. Webb Simpson	30	\$4,165,468	\$2,500,000	\$6,665,468
41. Stacy Lewis	NR	\$2,720,750	\$3,900,000	\$6,620,750
42. Michelle Wie	NR	\$2,024,796	\$4,350,000	\$6,374,796
43. Patrick Reed	NR	\$4,740,276	\$1,400,000	\$6,140,276
44. Victor Dubuisson	NR	\$3,954,287	\$1,800,000	\$5,754,287
45. Ryan Moore	NR	\$4,426,763	\$1,250,000	\$5,676,763
46. Brandt Snedeker	25	\$2,168,573	\$3,500,000	\$5,668,573
47. Paula Creamer	48	\$764,270	\$4,500,000	\$5,264,270
48. Padraig Harringtor		\$714,258	\$4,250,000	\$4,964,258
49. <b>Kevin Na</b>	NR	\$3,961,774	\$1,000,000	\$4,961,774
50. Seung-yul Noh	NR	\$2,142,534	\$2,750,000	\$4,892,534
		-	•	-

NR Not ranked among the Golf Digest 50 in February 2014. SOURCES Figures for the list were compiled through Golf Digest interviews with agents, players, executives of companies involved with endorsements, industry analysts and through the official money lists of the professional tours. Aussies marked in green.



But just as Tiger is no longer No.1 on the golf course, falling to No.62 in the world rankings at the time of writing, he is no longer the runaway leader in earnings. After dominating the Golf Digest 50 money list from its inception in 2004, Woods had his slimmest lead ever in the 12th annual listing of winnings and off-course earnings, edging Phil Mickelson and Rory McIlroy.

Woods, who won only \$610,775 in an injury-plagued 2014 season, topped the list with \$55.1 million. Mickelson was second at \$50.7 million and McIlroy third with \$49.2 million. Compare that to Tiger's 2009 earnings, before scandal and injuries started to take a toll, when Woods totalled \$121.9 million, with \$21 million of that coming in on-course winnings. That year, his GD50 lead over No.2 was \$80 million. Entering his 20th season as a pro, Woods, 39, has earned more than \$1.3 billion in his career, with all but \$155.8 million of that coming off the course [see charts].

Those chasing him are younger, more global and more talented than ever. Eighteen players on this year's GD50 are 30 or younger, representing seven nations. Eleven of those 18 are American, including Stacy Lewis, Michelle Wie and Paula Creamer, the only women on the list.

"Golf has been in a generational bear market, but someone always comes along," says Casey Alexander, an analyst for Gilford Securities Inc, who specialises in golf stocks. "It almost takes the decline of the previous generation's heartthrob to create the conditions for a new dominant force to emerge.

"Palmer overlapped a little with Hogan, Jack with Arnold, and Tiger with Jack in that he's chasing that 18-majors record.

### TIGER'S EARNINGS: \$1.3 BILLION AND COUNTING

<b>YEAR</b>	ON COURSE	OFF COURSE	TOTAL
1996	\$894,060	\$12,250,000	\$13,144,060
1997	\$2,380,831	\$19,500,000	\$21,880,831
1998	\$2,927,946	\$27,000,000	\$29,927,946
1999	\$7,681,625	\$27,000,000	\$34,681,625
2000	\$11,034,530	\$38,000,000	\$49,034,530
2001	\$7,771,562	\$56,000,000	\$63,771,562
2002	\$8,292,188	\$67,000,000	\$75,292,188
2003	\$6,700,288	\$77,000,000	\$83,700,288
2004	\$6,370,407	\$83,000,000	\$89,370,407
2005	\$11,992,739	\$75,000,000	\$86,992,739
2006	\$11,941,827	\$87,000,000	\$98,941,827
2007	\$22,902,706	\$99,800,000	\$122,702,706
2008	\$7,737,626	\$109,600,000	\$117,337,626
2009	\$21,015,196	\$100,900,000	\$121,915,196
2010	\$2,294,116	\$72,000,000	\$74,294,116
2011	\$2,067,059	\$62,000,000	\$64,067,059
2012	\$9,124,386	\$77,000,000	\$86,124,386
2013	\$12,091,508	\$71,000,000	\$83,091,508
2014	\$610,775	\$54,500,000	\$55,110,775
TOTAL	\$155,831,375	\$1,215,550,000	\$1,371,381,375

### ► EIGHTEEN PLAYERS ON THIS YEAR'S LIST ARE 30 OR YOUNGER

"There are a lot of young players out there representing the global marketplace who have the talent to be that guy."

Mickelson, still a force at 44, appears likely to transition nicely into an elder statesman in the game and maintain the financial impact of icons like Palmer (No.4 at age 85), Nicklaus (5), Gary Player (11) and Greg Norman (17), who continue to benefit financially in design, licensing and endorsement deals long after their competitive days.

McIlroy made it to No.3 in part because of highly lucrative deals with Nike, Omega and Bose and because his two major victories in 2014 propelled him to more than \$14 million in on-course earnings. McIlroy was surpassed in winnings only by Billy Horschel (6), who earned more than \$15.5 million, thanks to the \$10 million FedEx Cup bonus. McIlroy, 25, and Horschel, 28, are part of the youth movement that is invigorating the game. No.12 Rickie Fowler is 26, No.16 Jordan Spieth is only 21, and No.19, US Open champ Martin Kaymer of Germany, is 30. Lewis, who turned 30 in February, is the highest-ranked woman, at No.41; Wie, 25, is No.42; and Creamer, 28, is No.47. Lurking just outside the top 50 are Inbee Park, 26, and Lydia Ko, 17, who already has five LPGA career wins and is almost certain to crack next year's GD50.

Other young stars making this year's list: Americans Dustin Johnson, Chris Kirk, Keegan Bradley, Webb Simpson and Patrick Reed, Aussie Jason Day, Seung-yul Noh of South Korea, Victor Dubuisson of France, and Hideki Matsuyama and Ryo Ishikawa of Japan.

### 'ANOTHER STRONG MOVE FOR NO.1'

IVE years after his scandal, Woods has yet to reclaim his aura of invincibility. Despite eight victories in that span (a great career for many players) he has not won a major since the 2008 US Open, leaving him stuck at 14.

At one point, Woods' endorsement partners included Accenture, American Express, AT&T, Chevron, EA Sports, Gatorade, Gillette and General Motors. The list in 2014 included MusclePharm (a sports-nutrition brand), Kowa (a Japanese textile company), NetJets, Nike, Rolex (the biggest name he has added post-scandal), Tatweer (the golf community in Dubai that was abandoned in 2011 when the real-estate bubble burst but for which he is still being paid) and Upper Deck, plus other design work and lucrative appearance fees. Nearly half of Woods' \$54.5 million in off-course money comes from his Nike deal, which at one point accounted for only about 20 per cent of his endorsement/ design/appearance income.

"Consumers' memories tend to be short, and they routinely focus on success, as well as turnarounds and compelling stories," says David Carter of The Sports Business Group and the University of Southern California's Marshall Sports Business Institute. "Add to this the perspective of the global marketplace, and it's possible he can regain much of his earnings power."

Alexander says that between Nicklaus' two major victories in 1980 and his Masters win in 1986 at age 46, his off-the-course revenue was "declining precipitously, but he clearly was only one major away from a lifetime of endorsement opportunities. The '86 Masters made a huge impact in design and endorsement opportunities for Nicklaus. And if Tiger wins a major now, he's not coming back from his personal problems, he's coming back from injuries, and that will be perceived more positively."

Late in 2014, Woods announced a business deal with Hero MotorCorp, a motorcycle manufacturer based in India. His agent, Mark Steinberg of Excel Sports Management, says injuries cost Woods "big, big, big appearance money in Asia" late last year but says at least one more deal will be announced in 2015.

"It won't be over," Steinberg says. "He'll make another strong move for No.1, another move for multiple years." Steinberg also says that Woods will focus more on licensing deals, which are less time-consuming than endorsements, each of which involves a commitment of several days a year. "It's the Arnold Palmer model," Steinberg says of pursuing licensing arrangements.

Far more than just himself, Woods helped make all the stakeholders in the game a lot of money. "Yes, he did bad things, but he was also tremendous for the game," one agent says. "If Tiger had the kind of season Rory had [in 2014], think what that would have meant for the game of golf. Think where we would be right now."

The Palmer-Nicklaus-Player-Norman group shows the enduring earning power of golfers. Woods and Mickelson will almost certainly follow that path.

Mickelson has Barlcays, Callaway, Exxon-Mobil, KPMG, Rolex and Amgen among his business partners. "Phil is the full package when it comes to someone to represent our brand," says Shawn Quill, director of sports marketing and sponsorships at KPMG. "What makes Phil really great is that he is more than a brilliant golfer. He understands business, he understands economics, he is so well-read, and he can have conversations with business executives about anything. That makes him unique. Building relationships with very senior executives is tough. Golf is a great venue for that. The course is a great place to do

business, and Phil helps us do business with those companies."

Realising the value Mickelson provides in connecting with business executives led KPMG to a relationship with Lewis. "We had never sponsored a female athlete before," Quill says. "We noticed in our outings with Phil that we weren't getting as many female executives as we wanted. And there are now more female executives."

KPMG has taken that commitment to the next level, and this year begins a five-year deal to sponsor the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, increasing the purse of what was the LPGA Championship by more than 50 per cent, to \$3.5 million, and getting weekend network TV exposure on NBC in addition to Thursday-Friday on Golf Channel.

"We want other tournaments to raise their purses like we did," Quill says. "That's the only way to get more women on the Golf Digest 50." The tournament at Westchester Country Club this year will include a one-day summit on empowering women. "We want to increase the number of women in leadership positions," Quill says. "Stacy says, 'I have a dream that one day our tour will get there.' What's driving us is to realise that vision she has."

For McIlroy, whose representatives declined to speak for this article (likely because he was engaged in a lawsuit over his finances with past business associates), 2015 could be an important year. After he won the 2011 US Open by eight strokes, his first major victory, McIlory played the next five majors without finishing inside the top 25. Then, after winning the 2012 PGA Championship, also by eight strokes, he fell from No.1 and went six majors without contending before winning the British Open and PGA Championship last year.

"Rory has been the optimum of a streak player," Alexander says. "His cold streaks have been as cold as his hot streaks have been hot. And now there is starting to be some conversation about him and the Nicklaus record. That will take guts, but if he can live up to the challenge and achieve consistent greatness, then the sky is the limit for him."

McIlroy goes into Augusta National this month having won two majors in a row and needing the Masters to become only the sixth player to complete the career Grand Slam.

And imagine the buzz if he goes to the US Open at Chambers Bay in June chasing the 'Rory Slam', trying to match Woods' feat of winning four majors in a row.

No one really ran with Woods to challenge him for No.1, but you get the feeling someone will keep pace with McIlroy. There is too much young talent out there for that not to happen, and there are dozens of businesses with millions of endorsement dollars just waiting. **6** 





# AREAL AUSSIC Golf Hero

The life and death of Lieutenant Clyde Pearce, first native-born winner of the Australian Open

BY GEOFF ARMSTRONG





SMALL BOAT LANDED at
Gallipoli at noon on
November 13, 1915.
On board was Lord
Kitchener, the British
Army's Commanderin-Chief, a legendary
figure said to have
had the bestknown face in
the British
Empire next

to King George. Kitchener wanted to see for himself what had become a military stalemate. When he stepped off the boat, Kitchener was surrounded by soldiers who, though sick and weary, cheered him keenly.

Army records suggest that Private Clyde Pearce of the 10th Light Horse Regiment also landed at Gallipoli on this day. He may have witnessed Kitchener's arrival and may even have seen some irony in his low-key landing compared to the hero's welcome the Field Marshal received.

Pearce had once been a celebrity himself, in sporting circles at least, back in the days when he was the best golfer in Australia. He knew what it was like to be cheered by a crowd; it was just seven years since he became the first native-born Australian Open champion. That mattered for nothing now.

Kitchener stayed for just a couple of hours, during which time he saw enough, it is said, to recommend a withdrawal. Pearce was there for a month. He missed the worst of the

ghastly clashes that had cost so many lives, but he still froze through some of the worst of the Gallipoli winter and – according to the 10th Light Horse's diary – survived "heavy bombing and machine-gun fire … Turkish attacks … Heavy shelling … Continuous bombardment…'

In between, there was the 'silence'. Through late November and December, to set the scene for their departure, the troops were ordered to be quiet and that "no form or any sign of life was to be visible."

You couldn't fire a rifle, nor curse the snow. The evacuation became one of the most notable triumphs of the entire campaign. Not a man was lost. Pearce and his comrades left Gallipoli on December 16.

His war had just begun.



**PEARCE WAS THE SECOND SON** of Edward and Emmeline Pearce, respected Tasmanians - stalwarts of Hobart's golfing community. He first came to sporting prominence in 1903, aged 15, playing off scratch in interclub golf matches and finishing 19th at the Australian Amateur Championship.

He had what a Launceston *Daily Telegraph* story from that year described as a "very orthodox style."

"[Pearce] does not waste much time in addressing his ball, times well and has a most correct follow through," the paper continued.

Wiry, strong and athletic, Pearce was

fortunate as a boy to receive individual tuition from two Scottish professionals, James Hunter and Edgar Martin, who worked at the fledgling Hobart Golf Club in the early years of the 20th century.

From 1904 to 1910, his name was prominent at Australia's major golf carnival, which featured the Open and the Amateur Championship. He reached four straight Amateur finals between 1906 and 1909, and claimed the Open/Amateur double in 1908.

Galleries were amazed at how far and straight Pearce – a man of medium height (enlistment papers record him as 5ft 9½in, or 177cm) – could send the ball with seemingly little effort.

A writer using the pseudonym 'Mid Iron' analysed his swing for the *Australasian* and concluded, "There is no 'hit' in any sense of that word ... it is a pure swing that simply sweeps the ball away, but a very firm crisp sweep indeed."

An *Evening News* reporter at the 1908 Australian Open described Pearce's golf as "drive, approach, long putt, short putt; nothing ever seems to get out of order."

He was in superb touch one day while playing at Albury in country New South Wales, his round including a hole-in-one at the 180-metre first hole. Afterwards, his vanquished opponent admitted forlornly, "I got so wrapped up watching Pearce play I couldn't concentrate on the darned game."

Pearce was, though, a mediocre putter. Photographs show him crouching low over



the ball, hands gripping the club well down the handle. The *New Zealand Herald* reckoned "four comparatively easy (missed) putts" cost Pearce his first Australian Amateur final, against Ernest Gill in 1906.

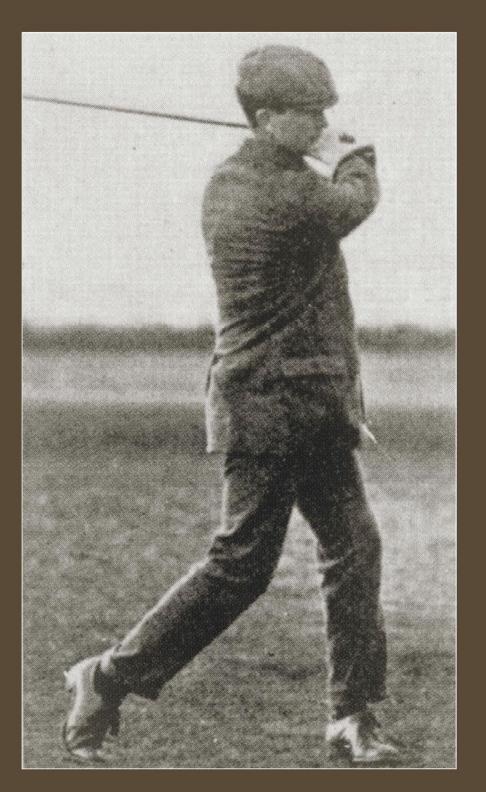
He began the 1908 Open at The Australian with a course-record 75 and shot the same score in the second round, but then missed 10 putts he should have made during the first 18 of 36 holes on the final day.

Mid Iron wrote that Pearce's "long game and approaching had been just as fine as ever (but) three (putts) on the green at many of the holes completely neutralised the real excellence of the Tasmanian's play."

So upset and confused did Pearce appear during lunch, some observers assumed he was out of contention. But he regrouped to shoot another 75 – a performance so brave and precise it probably remained the finest final round in Open history until Norman Von Nida's last-day 65 at Royal Melbourne in 1953 (which itself was never challenged as best ever until Jordan Spieth conquered The Australian in 2014).

Pearce then beat Michael Scott 6-and-5 in the semi-final of the Amateur Championship and N.F. Christoe 10-and-8 in the final to do the 'double'.

It was an impressive feat for one so young. What was most remarkable, the *Sydney Morning Herald* explained, was that Pearce had been so busy on his brother's farm he had not picked up a club all year until he arrived in Sydney three weeks before the Open.



### CLYDE BOWMAN PEARCE Born February 24, 1888, Hobart

Year	Australian Amateur Championship	Australian Open Championship
1903	<b>19</b> th	No tournament
1904	Quarter-finalist	<b>19</b> th
1905	Disqualified	DNP
1906	Runner-up	<b>15th</b>
1907	Runner-up	5th
1908	Champion	Champion
1909	Runner-up	5th
1910	Semi-finalist	5th

Note: The first four winners of the Australian Open — the Hon. Michael Scott (1904 and 1907), Dan Soutar (1905), Carnegie Clark (1906) — were all born in Britain.



A series of photographs of Pearce's swing in 1909, as seen in The Australasian.



IT HAD BEEN CLEAR SINCE his 18th birthday that Pearce was not just a golfer. In 1906, he had left Hobart for Corowa, on the Murray River in the the Riverina region of southern NSW, to work on the sheep farm his older brother Roy was managing. Both men joined the Corowa Golf Club and played when they could; the farm would remain Pearce's base for his annual sorties to Australian golf's championship week until 1910.

In 1911, Pearce enjoyed an extended tour of Britain and Ireland. He was accompanied by his parents and his younger brother Bruce, an accomplished left-hander and three-time Tasmanian Amateur champion. At the British Amateur Championships, Pearce was knocked out by Bernard Darwin, destined to become one of golf's finest writers, in the fourth round. Pearce's one tournament victory came at Peterhead, and he also impressed in Ireland, most notably during the stroke competition at the Irish Amateur Open Championship, when he was second in a 'blizzard' so dire many of the refreshment tents at Portmarnock were blown far away.

Immediately after the 1911 British Amateur, Darwin wrote in the London Sunday Times about the "desperate struggle" he and Pearce had enjoyed. "He is a beautifully accurate hitter with all his clubs," Darwin commented. "If he ever does hit a tee shot crooked, it seems only to occur by the merest accident."

Seventeen years later, the respected Scottish golf historian Donald Grant recalled Harold Hilton's victory in this Championship, and how a key factor in Hilton's triumph was his ability to put enough backspin on the ball

so his approach shots stayed on the small, true greens. "(Only) one other player had that shot," Grant wrote. "Clyde Pearce, Australia, a fine golfer."

On his return to Australia in November, Pearce was interviewed by the Hobart Mercury. All of 23 years old, he reveals himself as a traditionalist. His greatest respect was for 'old school" players, as he called them, who'd learned the game using the gutta-percha ball that went out of fashion around the turn of the century.

"They have the better swings," Pearce said. 'The young fellows 'hit' more and are therefore not nearly so certain of their game."



"Along the Great Southern (railway line) there are a great number of settlers who came from South Australia and Victoria," Perth's Western Mail reported in August 1911. "They are progressive men, full of grit and enterprise." Pearce and another young golfer, the left-handed 1909 Australian Open champion Claude Felstead, were cut from this cloth. The golf community was stunned to learn in January 1912 that the pair had purchased the Chybarlis farm - 2,500 acres of sheep and wheat country located between the townships of Pingelly and Mooterdine in Western Australia, about 160km southeast of Perth.

Both men signed up as members of the fledgling Pingelly Golf Club, with Pearce joining the handicapping committee and offering advice on the layout of the new course. But the Australasian confirmed in August that Pearce and Felstead were "too busily engaged in their business in the West" to contemplate playing in any big tournaments. Twelve months later, Pearce did enter the Western Australian Amateur Championship and the

inaugural WA Open, after showing he was in good form by breaking the course record at the Fremantle and Perth clubs, the latter by six shots. In the Open, Pearce found a worthy rival in the English-born Norman Fowlie, but Pearce enjoyed a decisive win with a superb final round."Up to his second shot at the 17th," the West Australian said of this performance, (he) made no mistakes." His 4-and-2 defeat of Fowlie in the Amateur final two days later was similarly clear-cut.



Of course, we can never be certain what truly motivated Pearce's decision to sign up for the War. The fact he did so just days after the initial landing at Gallipoli suggests it was more about patriotic duty that any quest for adventure. A number of Pingelly Golf Club members had enlisted, and one, Private Harvey Rae, had been wounded in action, his left arm amputated. Private Rae, from the 11th Battalion, was one of the first to come ashore on April 25, around 4.30am. He was hit by an explosive bullet" in the early afternoon.

On May 13, Pearce participated in a stroke competition at Pingelly. Except for a couple of rounds he managed to sneak in when on leave from camp, this was his last game of competitive golf. On November 12, Claude Felstead got married in West Perth, though the mood at the wedding was tempered when the groom revealed he was about to enlist.

The next day, Clyde Pearce and Lord Kitchener arrived at Anzac Cove.



Claude Felstead, Clyde Pearce's business partner in Western Australia, Australian Open champion in 1909.



FOR MOST OF 1916, Pearce served in the Middle East. He was quickly promoted to Lance-Corporal, but spent time in hospital – at first irritated by an ingrown toenail then laid so low by cholera. A recommendation for further promotion arrived soon after he returned to duty and on November 13 he was ordered to proceed to Alexandria, Egypt, from where he would sail on the Minnewaska to England, to accept a commission as a second lieutenant, 52nd Battalion. Unfortunately, his journey was interrupted when the Minnewaska hit a mine laid by a German U-boat off Souda Bay, Crete, and was fortunate to make it to shore. No lives were lost but the one-time ocean liner was ruined.

On May 10, 1917, the *West Australian* revealed that Pearce was in France. "Whilst in Britain (at officer training) he had some golf at Glasgow with some old friends and spent some days of his leave there," the paper reported. "He has had a month in the front line."

During that month, Pearce was involved in the great struggles at Lagnicourt, Noreuil and Bullecourt, in France. "No one could have failed to realise what a magnificent officer your son was," Lt Col Harold Pope, the 52nd's commanding officer, would recall of these conflicts in a letter to Pearce's father.

Soon after, the members of the 52nd were dodging shells and machine-gun fire during the epic Battle of Messines in Belgium, fighting for strategically important high ground south of the town of Ypres, not far from the French border.

The 52nd Battalion's chaplain, Rev Donald Blackwood remembered how Pearce "led his men on so splendidly and bravely in the first great charge of June 7," and how "he did splendid work in organising the new line and repelling counterattacks." But Rev Blackwood continued:

"He brought his men out safely from the Messines Ridge on the Sunday morning, had a good rest, and then led them in again to a more difficult bit of work – a more strenuous charge. In this he fell, right in the enemy's barbed wire. He was there among the first at the head of his men..."

The Australians believed the German wire had been cleared, but this was not always so. Pearce, at the head of his platoon, became trapped, a sitting duck. His Australian Red Cross 'Wounded and Missing Enquiry' file contains the following accounts:

Corporal Henry Butler: "He was my platoon officer. I saw him killed by machine-gun fire, on the right of Messines. We were on our way over and he got caught in the wire; he was killed outright – six or so bullets right through him. We went on and gained the objective. We lost a terrible lot then, owing to the wire not being properly cut."



▲ The silver 'trophy' – a soup tureen, a proud souvenir retained by the Pearce family – that was presented to Clyde Pearce for winning the 1908 Australian Open. It is 30cm wide, 23cm deep and 22cm high. The current perpetual Open trophy, the Stonehaven Cup, was first presented in 1930.

Corporal George Jones: "I saw Lt Pearce lying dead in the field on the 2nd advance in the Messines stunt. He was within 150 yards of the German trenches, shot through the centre of the forehead. Mears, another stretcher bearer in A Company and Falkner in C Company buried him where he was lying."

The British won the Battle of Messines, but at a high cost: almost 7000 Australian lives were lost. Corporal Arthur Dowling met a soldier who had tried to carry Pearce out, before realising there was no use. According to Dowling, the great golfer's last words were brave and heart-rending: 'I'm all right...'



**CLYDE PEARCE'S DEATH IS** commemorated at the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres, which bears the names of more than 54,000 men whose final resting places are now unknown. His grieving parents built a memorial to their lost son, by helping to fund the relocation of the historic Mariners Church – which had been situated on the Hobart waterfront – to a new site at Sandy Bay, on part of what was (until 1914) the course of the Hobart Golf Club. A plaque at the 'new' Church of St Peter's, which still stands, remembers

Mr and Mrs Pearce's noble gesture. The tree planted in 1918 in Pearce's memory on Hobart's Soldiers Memorial Avenue is well maintained.

In the west, Claude Felstead returned from his stint with the Australian Flying Corps. In 1938, owing to illness, he put his two properties – Chybarlis and the nearby 1300-acre Glen Erne – on the market and retired to the city. He died in Perth in 1964. The clubs with which Felstead won the 1909 Australian Open are on display at Pingelly Golf Club and due recognition is made of his "business partner, Mr Clyde Pearce."

Elsewhere, as is sport's way, new heroes emerged and memories began to fade. From the 1930s, Pearce's name appeared occasionally in golf columns but mostly as a statistical footnote, rarely with any reference to his rare ability and unique back-story. His enormous courage, exceptional poise for one so young and remarkable ability to win big tournaments on a limited preparation was largely forgotten.

This year's Australian Open will be played almost 100 years to the day since Lord Kitchener and Clyde Pearce landed at Gallipoli. In this year of the Anzac Centenary, Australian golf should pause to remember its greatest hero. It's not too late. •



# MY BEST ADVICE FOR GETTING IT DONE AT CRUNCH TIME BY BILLY HORSCHEL

trying to sink a three-foot putt to win a \$10 skin from your mates or playing for a \$10 million bonus in the FedEx Cup, you're going to struggle if you let the magnitude of the moment make you do things you wouldn't normally do. If you want to be clutch, my first piece of advice is to be yourself. Swing with the rhythm that feels most comfortable; use the clubs and play the shots you have the most confidence in; and stick to your routines. Don't try to concentrate harder in those pressure moments. Instead, get out of your head and treat the tournament, round or shot as if it were a regular day on the course. It's part mental, part physical: You've got to think clearly and have a simple mechanical cue. Here's how to apply that and play clutch in five common situations.

### THE CRITICAL DRIVE

▶ When you can't afford to miss the fairway, your instinct might be to play conservative with a 3-wood or hybrid and bunt the ball out there. That's a bad idea. It's also a bad idea to grab your driver and try to crush one. Remember what I said about being yourself? That's helpful here. Hit your driver like you're on your favourite par 4 at your home course. The swing thought that works great for me in pressure situations is, Complete the backswing. Being nervous can make you cut your backswing short and rush the club down to the ball. Take your time getting the club back, and don't start the downswing until your body feels fully wound.

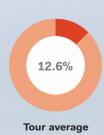


Clutch golfers not only find a way to fight their way out of the rough or trees, they often manage to hit a spectacular recovery shot; one that somehow gets on the green and sets up an improbable birdie. How do you pull off a great recovery? It's a three-step process: (1) Visualise the shot. (2) Rehearse it. (3) Commit to it. Usually your best chance at recovering from a bad spot is to hit the ball high. Why? From the rough, the ball has less backspin, so holding the green with a low ball flight is tough to do. From the trees, you probably wouldn't advance the ball far enough with a low shot to get home. To hit it higher, play the ball a little farther forward in your stance and tilt your upper body away from the target a touch. When you swing, don't hang back. Get your weight to your front side, and sweep the ball off the ground.

### ▶ BIRDIE OR BETTER FROM 160-180 METRES

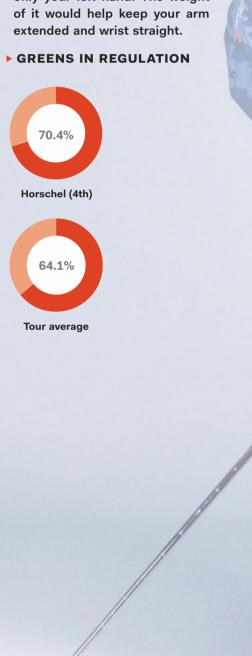


Horschel (36th)



### **KNOCKING IT STIFF**

Hitting an approach shot close to the pin should not be a happy accident. You can be a confident iron player if you remember one thing: distance control. If the pin is 140 metres and you hit it exactly 140m, it's not going to matter much if you're a little off line left or right. You'll still have a chance at birdie. Controlling distance comes down to making solid contact. To ensure you do, rotate back and through with minimal swaying. Here's something to think about: The left arm and hand swing through the hitting area long and straight. Think how you would swing the club if you were holding it with only your left hand. The weight





### 'THE CLUBHEAD STAYS BELOW YOUR HANDS WELL PAST IMPACT.'















# Same Old Seotty

IN THE TWO YEARS SINCE
HIS MASTERS TRIUMPH
EVERYTHING - YET NOTHING HAS CHANGED IN THE WORLD
OF ADAM SCOTT.

BY TONY WEBECK





T WAS THE COMING OUT PARTY for the guy who'd always given the impression he'd prefer to stay in.

Adam Scott's return to Australia in the summer of 2013 wearing world golf's most famous fabric was not merely a celebration, but a coronation as he met the masses in his month-long Royal (Pines, Melbourne and Sydney) tour.

While the decorated green jacket sat perfectly on his squared-off shoulders and he went within a par 4 of completing the Australian Triple Crown, Scott was also being sized up as a genuine successor to Greg Norman as the poster boy of Australian golf.

In his first tournament on home soil as Masters champion, Scott turned up to every Australian PGA function in his hometown on the Gold Coast. He signed countless autographs, posed for all manner of 'selfies' with adoring fans and then proceeded to win the golf tournament. Although he buried Australian sport's greatest hoodoo, Scott rejects the notion he is the green-and-gold

torchbearer. "I don't think about it like that at all, that's not my aim, to be the person that carries Australian golf," Scott tells AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST.

"The game of golf is strong here and we've got other great players out there who all play a part in that. I don't think that's up to me.

"All I'm trying to do is play the best golf I possibly can and, of course, if I do a really good job of that it's good for the game back here. But we've got so many good players I don't really feel that responsibility has to fall on just me."

The 'Adam Scott parade' was a scenario tournament promoters could only have dreamt and reminded long-time Australian promoter Tony Roosenburg of the drawing power of one particular Queenslander from a different era – one who had an influential role in Scott's ascendancy to the top of the golf world.

"That excitement used to always arrive when the Great White Shark (Greg Norman) drove into the gates and we hadn't had that for a while," says Roosenburg. "You don't sell a lot of tickets pre-event, but we had pre-sales go through the roof, which was mostly people saying that they didn't want to miss out on seeing Adam.

"When he came to the course there was this buzz – 'Adam has arrived'. It was exciting and something probably Australian golf needed for a long, long time.

"We've had a lot of great golfers, but not people that gave us a hell of a lot of personality and suddenly that came back after Adam won the green jacket and the emotional way he did it in the playoff.

"We had crowds (at the Australian Open) at 7am on Thursday at Royal Sydney... They were just huge. I've been running golf tournaments for 35 years and done Presidents Cups and all that sort of thing and that was as big as I've ever seen it at that time of the morning."

Former US PGA Tour member Paul Gow, on the Channel 10 commentary team for Scott's coronation at Royal Pines, was "blown away" by Scott's effort to share the occasion.

"I expected that from him because he



is a very humble type of person and very respectful of other people," says Gow.

"I probably didn't expect the amount that he shared with us. He hasn't been one to really open up to the media but he really embraced it and was honest with us. He told us that he'd often open the wardrobe door and have a look at the Masters jacket sitting in there. He was very honest with the Australian public as to how important that was for him and for Australian golf."

Roosenburg says Scott's Masters win not only renewed hunger amongst Aussie golf fans but helped to carry momentum through to the 2014 summer events. At the BetEasy Masters, he was runner-up to Nick Cullen, then finished fifth to a runaway Jordan Spieth at the Emirates Australian Open before pushing Greg Chalmers to a record playoff win at the Australian PGA.

Scott is undoubtedly having a major influence on the next generation of talented young Aussie pros now pushing their way to the fore.

Jack Wilson told AUSTRALIAN GOLF DIGEST last year that trying to think of fairway conversation with Scott at the 2013 Australian Masters was like trying to find the right words when you want to ask a girl out. Steven Bowditch said Scott was someone he'd always admired and always had "that little something that it takes to be a world No.1 golfer."

US PGA Tour and Web.com player Scott Gardiner was in awe of what he had been able to achieve. "To get that title as the No.1 player in the world and to win the Masters is something no Aussie has ever done and puts him right in the top echelon of golfers that we've had," says Gardiner.

"Everybody always knew what a great talent he was but to convert it on the biggest stage with all the extra pressure of being the first to win it from Australia ... I can't imagine the thoughts that went through his head to get there.

"It's great for a marketing purpose for our events down here and every one of us is indebted to him for making these (Australian) tournaments what they are with his presence.

"He's a great person and we're lucky to have him as a major ambassador for our game."

Yes, much has changed in the past two years, yet in many ways he remains the same old Scotty.

Scattered crumbs in a sea of tomato sauce splattered across a small white plate are all the remnants of a sausage roll and traveller pie that Scott has devoured in between media commitments and obligations with Titleist following the pro-am at Royal Pines last December. Although less taxing than 2013, the demands on Scott are great and we get to spend 15 minutes chatting about how life has

▶ Adam Scott shows off his green jacket at Augusta National [left]; with father Phil and coach Brad Malone [below] and shaking Rory McIlroy's hand after the Northern Irishman's 2013 Australian Open victory [bottom].





changed. In the last throes of our interview, he reveals he is nine weeks away from becoming a father, with wife Marie giving birth to daughter Bo Vera Scott on February 15.

US PGA Tour veteran Boo Weekley described him simply as the "same old Scotty" but there's no question how the sporting public sees the 34-year-old has changed significantly over the past 24 months.

He appears almost embarrassed when you relate stories such as Wilson's to him but concedes he is in a greater position now to accept the influence he has on the generations to come than in earlier times in his career.

"I guess it's just part of your career developing or evolving," says Scott. "There's no doubt I'm less shy than I was 10 years ago and I wasn't as world-wise either, I guess. You just hopefully learn as you go and I think that's what I've continued to do.

"It's an interesting thing, it's not something that I think about very much other than that I feel that all professional golfers have that responsibility to behave in a certain fashion







'I feel that all professional golfers have that responsibility to behave in a certain fashion because you are influential as a professional sportsperson'



because you are influential as a professional sportsperson."

The corporate world has also come knocking in the past two years but Scott has remained loyal to his four key partners – Titleist, Rolex, Uniqlo and Mercedes Benz. The deal with Uniqlo – a Japanese clothing retailer – was signed on the Sunday prior to Scott's Masters win while the deals with Titleist and Rolex stretch back more than a decade.

Scott remains dedicated to finding the right balance between corporate responsibilities, his private life, commitment to the Adam Scott Foundation (in its 10th year in 2015) and his ultimate pursuit to the best golfer he can be.

Only South African Charles Schwartzel's Sunday blitzkrieg prevented Scott and Jason Day from finishing first and second at the 2011 Masters and, according to Roosenburg, it will take continued extraordinary performances to keep Australian golf on its current upward trend.

"It's been two very exciting years in Australian golf and I hope that it continues," says Roosenburg. "Hopefully it will translate into good commercial deals so we can get Australian golf back to where it should be.

"We were waiting for so many years for somebody to do something outstanding. Adam had been so close to winning the British Open but then to win the Masters I immediately thought, *This is going to push the sport up to where we want it again.*"

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### A sight for sore eyes

IT WAS A STARTLING REVELATION many amateurs with swing analysis apps on their mobile phones should well pay attention to: "I don't watch my swing often at all. I might see two or three swings a year and that's about it," reveals Scott.

Gow says Scott is one of few golfers blessed to have "come out of the womb with a golf

swing that looks like that." He commends Scott's team for making few swing changes as he enters his 16th year as a professional.

With father Phil, a PGA professional, laying the groundwork with sound fundamentals, Scott's only significant swing change came at the end of 2009 when he left Butch Harmon to start working with Brad Malone, who also happens to be his brother-in-law.

This partnership has yielded 12 tournament wins (including the PGA Grand Slam of Golf and ISPS Handa World Cup of Golf) in the past five years and Scott says he swings best when free of technical thoughts.

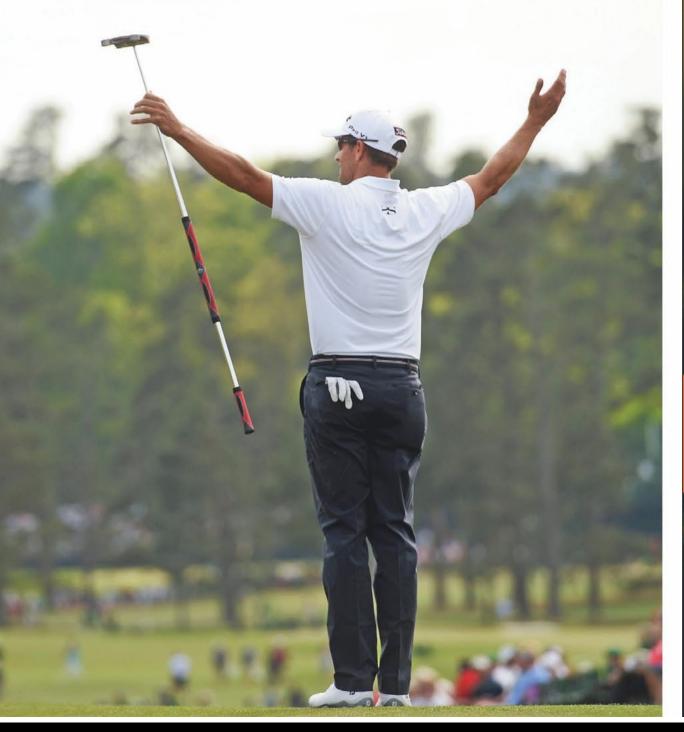
"I have no idea really what I'm looking at when I'm looking at (my swing)," Scott says about self-analysing the swing widely regarded as the most enviable in golf. "I don't have a good education in golf technique from a coaching side so I'm best not to voice an opinion about my swing.

"My coach likes the fact that I don't either, because we want to keep it as free as possible

## Adam Scott at the Majors since 2002



	TOURNAMENTS PLAYED (US PGA AND EUROPEAN TOURS)	Masters	US OPEN	BRITISH OPEN	US PGA
2002	28	T9	MC	MC	T23
2003	26	T23	МС	МС	T23
2004	28	МС	МС	T42	T9
2005	23	Тзз	T28	T34	T40
2006	22	T27	T21	T8	Тз
2007	20	T27	MC	T27	T12
2008	20	T25	T26	T16	МС
2009	25	МС	T36	МС	МС
2010	22	T18	МС	T27	Тз9
2011	18	T2	MC	T25	7
2012	18	T8	T15	2	T11
2013	16	P1	T45	Тз	Т5
2014	17	T14	T9	Т5	T15







and rely on my own natural ability and instincts to get me around the golf course. With Brad's guidance and monitoring of the fundamentals of my golf swing, it all kind of stays in place.

"I think it's a good thing that I don't watch the swing too much, and I think for almost 90 per cent of everyone else they probably shouldn't watch their swing so much either.

"Dad taught me fundamentals and I think, somehow, I was gifted quite a nice rhythm and flow to my golf swing. So with those fundamentals – and trying to copy Greg Norman for a long time – I was in good shape."

For Gow, who confessed to watching videos of his swing "every five seconds" in his 20-year career, hearing Scott's approach to his swing was a breath of fresh air in the world of paralysis-by-analysis.

"He surfs a lot so I reckon he approaches sports and everything with a feel attitude; there's no technique involved at all," says Gow.

"Technique has destroyed a lot of players because they get so into it but he hasn't had to go through that pain. That's incredible.

"I remember watching this young 16-yearold kid that went to Kooralbyn Valley Golf School and I watched his swing and I thought it was Tiger Woods' lookalike; he mimicked Tiger's swing but it wasn't Tiger, it was Adam Scott." 000

### **Father time**

**LIKE HIS AUGUSTA TRIUMPH,** the arrival of Bo Vera Scott has the potential to change everything; only time will tell what influence she'll have on her father's golf.

Having spent two months on the Gold Coast after the PGA, the extended layoff could have left him feeling either refreshed or rusty. Taking a baby on tour will also impact on his preparation.

"For some players it (fatherhood) makes them play better because they cherish the time they're practising, so preparation is more concentrated, says Gow. "But for others it's a distraction where they'd rather be home with the baby and mother."

Speaking of Bo's impending arrival, Scott couldn't mask the sense of excitement at becoming a father.

He described the discovery that Marie was pregnant as a pleasant surprise and, unlike his golf swing, he may reach out to other players for advice on juggling fatherhood with tour life. "It's got to that point in life and that will be a new challenge and hopefully a lot of fun," says Scott.

"We're not going to be in one place for very long at the moment so it's going to be a travelling baby and have to do with makeshift beds for the time being but I'm pretty sure Bo Vera won't know the difference.

"Fortunately I've paid attention to all the guys trying to figure out how to raise their kids. I'm sure there are no secrets and you learn as you go along. But I might have to ask for some nappy-changing advice."

Scott and Marie will celebrate the first anniversary of their very private wedding on April 17, five days after the completion of the Masters. But even if he wins a second green jacket it won't change how Marie views her husband.

Becoming the No.1 golfer in the world certainly didn't get him out of having to put the bins out at their Bahamas residence. Marie's influence – and that of his support team – helps him to always remain grounded.

"Of course, my wife has a big part in that because we spend a lot of time together," says Scott. "And then if I'm ever out of line I can rely on my mates to pull my head in.

"They won't let me get carried away with anything and it's nice to have those people around."

Adds Gardiner: "He's still the guy that goes back and mixes with the people he grew up playing golf with.

"He's about a normal a guy as you'd want to meet." **6** 



### **Major overhaul**

AT THE end of the 2009 PGA Tour season Adam Scott knew it wasn't working. He'd played 25 events spread across the US and European tours and if not for a confidence-inspiring Presidents Cup selection by childhood idol Greg Norman perhaps the funk would have lasted even longer.

Scott admitted in 2011 that his fundamentals had become "loose and sloppy" and set about rectifying those deficiencies with new coach Brad Malone. Those changes led to his breakthrough win on home soil – the 2009 Australian Open.He also came to the realisation his approach to tournament golf had to change if he wanted become a more consistent performer in major championships.

In the nine years in which he had played in all four major championships between 2002-2010, Scott registered only four top-10 finishes. Scott's best result was a share of third at the 2006 US PGA Championship. Since his decision to adopt a more limited schedule in 2011, Scott has finished in the top 10 in majors an astonishing nine times. In the past 16 majors Scott has missed only one cut (2011 US Open) and finished outside the top-25 once.

"With a bit of poor golf, it doesn't take long to start getting that burn-out feel," says Scott."I played a slightly lighter (schedule) in 2010 but there were still some frustrations with the game as things were developing. It was time to realise that if I burn out now I can forget winning majors and achieving my goals.

"Realising I'm going to play in a lot more tournaments, I just decided to cut heaps out and spend some time away from the tour working on my game in a different environment. If you get in that vicious cycle out on the tour, there's no breaking out of it and I needed to change a lot of things to become a better player. My swing, the putting, my schedule and to feel happier as well. The week-in, week-out hotel thing takes its toll after 10 years; a little less time on the road was nice at that point."

Scott's recent success in the majors also coincided with his partnership with caddie Steve Williams. It was a successful union that came to an end last September, with Scott appointing Zimbabwean Mike Kerr as his full-time bagman in December. Paul Gow believes the influence of Williams will be felt throughout

the remainder of Scott's career.

"He probably didn't have that little bit of grit that he needed to dig deep and I find that he does that a lot more often now," says Gow. "I think it's come from the time he spent with Steve, who has got a lot of that and has instilled it in Adam. I think Adam will carry that for a long time. We know he's got the game, it's just whether he can produce that on a week-to-week basis or a major-to-major basis and I think he can.

"I don't think he's changed as a person, he just believes in himself a lot more now than he has in the past."

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► Scott celebrates with the Fanatics at the 2013 World Cup of Golf (opposite page) and working on his putting with Malone.



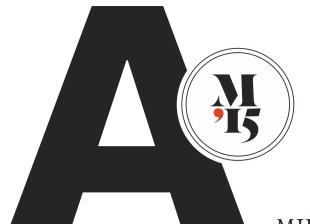




# THE STORY OF RORY

HE'S CHISELLED,
HE'S FOCUSED
AND HE'S READY
TO GO FOR THE
CAREER SLAM
BY JAIME DIAZ





MID the steel beams and industrial interior of a vast Chelsea Piers gym on the West Side of Manhattan, Rory McIlroy is right at home. High-tech fitness shirt straining across his broad back, vein-popping forearms, sharply defined jawline, curly locks cropped close. Everything is sleek, strong and stylish. McIlroy is 25, and the mop-haired, slightly puffy, rosy-cheeked cherub who a few years ago couldn't stand on one leg for more than a few seconds is gone. McIlroy is in full workout regalia in one of his favourite cities not because he's meeting his sport scientist/ trainer, Dr Stephen McGregor, for one of their intense 90-minute sessions, but because he's doing a photo shoot for the brand of headphones he endorses. But when an assistant brings a spray bottle to McIlroy to simulate perspiration, the world No.1 politely declines before hopping on a spinning cycle

There is no zealot like a convert, and these days McIlroy is willing to invest whatever sweat equity will get him to the highest reaches of excellence. Last year McIlroy got busy like no other time in his life, following the direction of McGregor, swing instructor Michael Bannon and putting coach Dave Stockton. Even more, McIlroy reawakened his passion for golf. "It's what I think about when I get up in the morning," he said after winning the British Open at Hoylake. "It's what I think about when I go to bed."

That mind-set might have evolved slowly, but history will mark May 21 as the moment McIlroy publicly broke off his engagement with Caroline Wozniacki at the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth. Five days later, when he came from seven shots down in the final round to get his first win in Europe or the US in 18 months,

he appeared a new man. Even after the victory, McIlroy was understandably subdued. But it wasn't long before he set a new course.

"After (the breakup), I thought, What else do I have in my life?" he says during lunch at the downtown Standard, High Line. "I have family and friends, but they're always going to be there. What else? That's when I decided, You know what, I'm just going to immerse myself in golf for a while. I spent more time at it, thought about it more, spent more time at the gym. Because that's all I had, and that's all I wanted to do."

McIlroy takes a forkful of his Atlantic salmon with a side of Brussels sprouts, a meal approved by McGregor, and explains how as a golfer, he has become decidedly anti-slacker.

"I've come across enough successful people now to know that the best in whatever walk MCILROY TAKES ON 127KG,
THEN TWEETED THE PHOTO WITH THE
MESSAGE, BETTER NEVER STOPS.



to churn hard for a full five minutes. The moisture he raises could have been produced with a few well-placed sprays, but McIlroy is pleased by the authenticity of his effort. With the same playful pride from the week before, when he tweeted a photo of himself lifting 127 kilograms, accompanied by the message, *Better never stops*, he points to his damp shirt and says, "That's earned."

of life, they're the ones who just work the hardest. I realised that if I want to be the best and fulfill my potential, I'm going to have to do the same thing. And for those who are lucky enough to be born with a gift and then choose to work the hardest ... I mean, that's the combination."

### AFTER A MONSTER 2014, BIGGER GOALS IN 2015

N 2014, the payoff was big: two major-championship wins, one grinded out on the links at Hoylake, the other won with a desperate sprint from behind in the US PGA Championship at Valhalla. In their way, both were more impressive and confidencebuilding than his eight-stroke victories at the 2011 US Open and 2012 PGA Championship, which were blinding blasts of pure talent that testify to McIlroy's ability to dominate when he's on. But those first

two Major victories did not truly test him in a final-nine crucible. For good measure last year, McIlroy administered a nomercy 5-and-4 beating of friend and rival Rickie Fowler in Ryder Cup singles, a match in which McIlroy started 6-under through six holes.

This year, the payoff target is even bigger: victory at the Masters, which would give McIlroy the career Grand Slam, his third major in a row, and a chance at the Rory Slam in the US Open at Chambers Bay.

At first glance, McIlroy should be the favourite at Augusta. The kind of driving he exhibited at Hoylake and Valhalla – where he led the fields with averages of 300 metres and 289m, respectively, displaying the best seen in back-to-back Major championships since Tiger Woods won the 2000 US and British Opens – has been a key determiner at the Masters.

McIlroy dominated the US PGA Tour last year in strokes gained/driving, and the player who finished second was Bubba Watson, who has ridden his driver to two of the past three green jackets.

But there is evidence to support why McIlroy might not win at Augusta. In his six Masters, last year's T-8 is his best finish [see chart]. In those 22 rounds, he has made an astounding 11 double-bogevs and three triple-bogeys. Just as amazing, considering McIlroy's length, his cumulative total on the par 5s is only 21-under. Although erratic short irons have been responsible for most of his big numbers, McIlroy has had trouble on the iconic greens, consistently finishing in the bottom half of the field in putting.

"A firm and fast Augusta, or a typical US Open setup, is probably the most difficult test for me," he says. "It requires so much discipline and precision, and that's something I'm still learning. I won a US Open, but it was much wetter than normal, and even Hoylake was soft for a links. So if Augusta is fiery, winning there would get me closer to being a complete player, because I don't think I'm there yet."

That's a measure of how much better McIlroy believes he can become. Another wrinkle is the way he celebrates rather than squelches the memory of his worst day in golf, the final round of the 2011 Masters, which he entered with a four-stroke lead but shot 80 to finish T-15.

"It was the most important day of my career, bar none," McIlroy said in January. "I learned what I shouldn't do when I'm in that situation again." Indeed, the next major, he won by eight strokes at Congressional, finishing with a 69.

### TRUSTING THE THREE WISE MEN

INCE then, and especially lately, there has been a lot McIlroy has learned he should do. In particular, trusting the wisdom and guidance of the performance experts who advise him.









The most cutting edge is McGregor, 41, an Englishman with a PhD in exercise physiology who has worked with the New York Knicks and Manchester City and directed Lee Westwood's physical transformation. McGregor started working with McIlroy in 2010, when the golfer began experiencing lower back pain.

'When we started, Rory had never done any physical training," McGregor said while following McIlroy at the Australian Open last November. McGregor has designed regimens of 90-minute sessions 10 times a week that primarily strengthen McIlroy's core and lower body but which have dramatically improved his overall fitness. "Rory possesses hyper-flexibility and has extraordinary hip speed," McGregor says. "To get more control and consistency, he needed to build body stability."

The trainer, who is a casual golfer, works closely with Bannon to see what swing adjustments the instructor is implementing. "We find out the golf swing he wants to achieve and change his body accordingly," McGregor says. McIlroy confirms that his improvement is an 8km/h increase in clubhead speed since 2010 (now 196km/h) with more consistency and it has come from his body getting stronger and faster rather than through any changes in technique.

"My swing has lost its whippy sort of action that came from a lot of arm and hand speed," he says. "Now it's more the big muscles controlling rotation, and that's the energy that's going into the ball."

Bannon has been McIlroy's only swing coach since the two began working together at Holywood Golf Club outside Belfast when Rory was 8. With a kindly, soft-spoken manner and a visage that evokes Paul Newman in "The Verdict," the 56-year-old father of four says, "I have no idea why our chemistry has worked. I just like Rory. And I love to help him play the kind of golf he can."

Bannon was a good player in Northern Ireland; he lost a playoff to Padraig Harrington in the 1997 Irish Professional Championship but made his name teaching promising juniors at Bangor Golf Club. (Since 2012, he has worked full-time for McIlroy.) In the video studio of the club, Bannon pulls out old tapes of his charges, including one of a certain ruddy-faced 8-year-old.

"Always a happy man, Rory," Bannon says of the smiling figure swinging a cut-down iron. On the tape, the instructor can be heard to gently implore, "Now hold your balance at the finish," which is the mantra behind McIlroy's ability to repeatedly stick his majestic follow-through. "There was nothing that was good at 8 that I took out," Bannon says. "I always wanted him to go away from a lesson with just one thing, not loads of things. Rory listened to everything and was very good at taking the lesson home and coming back having learned."

These days, "I keep an eye out," Bannon says. "Mostly small things. He can get a little

'I HAD THIS ABILITY GIVEN TO ME, BUT IT WAS SORT OF LIKE, "WHY ME?"'

-RORY MCILROY

off with his takeaway, lift it outside or pull it inside, or overcorrect either way. But when he gets his lines, he's pretty hard to contend with."

The mystic on the team is Stockton, 73, who has worked directly with McIlroy since they first met a few weeks after the 2011 Masters. "I told him he was lifting out of his crouch and moving too quickly to the ball," says the two-time US PGA Championship winner, who emphasises the importance of seeing the line and "walking into" a putt rhythmically. "He corrected that at Congressional."

Stockton's interactions with McIlroy have usually consisted of passing along musings on demeanor and walking pace, with only minimal work on the stroke, although McIlroy uses the Stockton-endorsed concept of "spot putting," rolling his ball over a visual spot about an inch in front of the ball.

Last season, McIlroy served as his own putting coach, with Stockton on call if needed. On the US PGA Tour, McIlroy went from 117th in strokes gained/ putting to 41st. "He told me, 'I've got it. I'm a good putter.' And he is," Stockton says. "He's the easiest student I've ever had because he needs next to nothing technically. As long as he keeps himself in the right frame of mind, I don't think putting is ever going to be an issue for him. What I see now is Rory having put things together mentally. As physically gifted as he is, I think the other players are in a world of hurt."

There's little doubt McIlroy is perceived as a tougher, more mature, more prepared, more clutch player than he was before. Though the aesthetics of his game have always drawn raves, from Johnny Miller citing the "Adonis follow-through" to Geoff





### **CLOSING IN ON THE CAREER GRAND SLAM**

▶ After winning the Open at Hoylake [above], Rory McIlroy needs a Masters victory to become the sixth male golfer to win the career Grand Slam. A win at Augusta National would be his third Major victory in a row, setting up a chance at matching Tiger Woods' four consecutive Major wins in 2000-01.

Name (Major wins)	Masters	US Open	British Open	PGA
Jack Nicklaus (18)	1963	1962	1966	1963
	1965	1967	1970	1971
	1966	1972	1978	1973
	1972	1980		1975
	1975			1980
	1986			
Tiger Woods (14)	1997	2000	2000	1999
	2001	2002	2005	2000
	2002	2008	2006	2006
	2005			2007
Ben Hogan (9)	1951	1948	1953	1946
	1953	1950		1948
		1951		
		1953		
Gary Player (9)	1961	1965	1959	1962
	1974		1968	1972
	1978		1974	
Gene Sarazen (7)	1935	1922	1932	1922
		1932		1923
				1933

MISSING A MAJOR (one short of the Slam, with Major win totals):

Masters: Walter Hagen (11), Jim Barnes (4), Lee Trevino (6), McIlroy (4)

US Open: Sam Snead (7), Phil Mickelson (5) British Open: Byron Nelson (5), Raymond Floyd (4) PGA Championship: Tom Watson (8), Arnold Palmer (7)

RORY AT AUGUSTA T-20 in 2009 (72-73-71-70), MC in 2010 (74-77), T-15 in 2011 (65-69-70-80), T-40 in 2012 (71-69-77-76), T-25 in 2013 (72-70-79-69), **T-8** in 2014 (71-77-71-69). Scoring average: 72.36

Ogilvy's opining that "Rory's shots make the best noise, more flush even than Tiger's at his best," the book on McIlroy among peers was that he lacked the grit to grind out victories when he wasn't "on." But with last year's performance, McIlroy has earned locker room credit. "Rory's got guts," says Jim Furyk. "He doesn't back down."

McIlroy is being seen as the kind of special player who can summon the will to seize the biggest moments. Augusta will be one of those, and if McIlroy pulls off the victory for the career Slam, he'll join Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Woods in a most exclusive club.

### **ACCEPTING HIS GENIUS**

IKE Bobby Jones, another amiable prodigy who had some lean years in his early 20s, McIlroy is a complex bundle of contradictions who, as he confesses, took a while to reconcile the power and price of his genius.

"Until just a few years ago, I don't want to say I felt guilty for being successful because I had this ability given to me, but it was sort of like, 'Why me?'" he says. "Because I felt like it's a very selfish thing to be a winner, a very selfish trait. Which is what you sort of need in golf. And I guess it just took me a while to be comfortable with that, just because of the personality I have. I realised that if I want to succeed in golf, which I do, I need to have it. What helped was realising how much people like winners, how people gravitate to them. So if other people are happy for me winning, then why can I not be?"

After a sip of a diet cola, "my treat", he continues.

"Now I want to win at golf all the time. I feel like golf has allowed me to be competitive at something in life and my fitness has become part of that and I feel like I've developed a bit of a ruthless streak on the golf course over the past few years. But I've no real ambition to be the best at anything else. If we're playing a game of cards, or a game of pool, or whatever it is, I'd happily let someone win just to keep them happy."

### **'COULD I HAVE WORKED HARDER AND WON MORE MAJORS?** PROBABLY. COULD I HAVE DRIVEN MYSELF **CRAZY DOING IT?**

Such talk by a professional athlete in a culture that reveres 24-7 competitors nearly begs for an intervention led by Michael Jordan. But McIlroy is very close to his father, Gerry, a bartender whose credo is, "It's nice to be nice, and it doesn't cost you a penny." The peoplepleasing example stuck, even though the increasing demands of his station can seem like a bottomless pit. "It's a natural tendency for me to be too nice," Rory says. "To be a little too giving to be able to focus on what you need to do, and sometimes I have to cut that back." Here he mentions his mother, Rosie, an introvert to his father's extrovert. "Sometimes," Rory says, "I wish I had a little more of my mum's reserve."

In January, when a McIlroy tweet defended Seahawks running back Marshawn Lynch's recalcitrance with the media ("Love this! Paid to play, not answer questions") it seemed a way of venting about the claustrophobic coverage of his dating life and the rest of his off-course activity and commitments. "Time has become his most precious commodity," says Brian McIlroy, one of Rory's uncles. "He is absolutely delighted on those days when there is nothing he has to do."

One thing that had threatened to take a great deal of time was McIlroy's lawsuit against his former management at Horizon Sports, which claimed that he was coerced into signing an "unconscionable" contract at a Christmas party. Horizon countersued, claiming breach of contract for unpaid fees.

In early February, on the eve of a trial that was estimated to last six weeks and possibly longer, the parties settled, with McIlroy agreeing to pay an undisclosed sum. According to Golf Digest's Ron Sirak, McIlroy has earned more than \$125 million on and off the course through last year. In 2014 alone, he made more than \$49 million.

"He isn't afraid of the lawsuit, however it goes," Brian McIlroy said in December. "Rory told me, 'I want it to sting. It will remind never to make that same mistake again.'"

McIlroy has remained cooperative with the media, and often expansive in his press conferences. He continues a sure touch with small grace notes, sending thank-you cards to proam partners and tournament officials, and he tips locker-room and security people personally with no regard for how he played. Says longtime Florida golf executive Andy O'Brien: "If you asked the cart guys at the Bear's Club who their favourite is among all the sports-celebrity members, it would be Rory, unanimously. He's the real deal when nobody's watching."

Is he being too nice? It raises the question that pertained to Arnold Palmer in his heyday: Will the very thing people love about McIlroy keep him from being what they, and he, most want him to be, a great winner?

Just as McIlroy is welcomed in some quarters as a respite from the imperial edge of the Woods era, so is he doubted for lacking the same quality. Ironically, probably no other current player has scrutinised Woods more than McIlroy. He happily presented himself as a "Tiger Woods expert" during a 2009 interview with CNN.

"I studied him a lot. A lot," McIlroy says. "I mean, his instruction book, How I Play Golf, when my dad was driving me all over Ireland for boys tournaments, I would sit in the front seat and just read that thing. It was my bible. I know every major Tiger's ever won, where he's won them, how many he won by, who finished second."

The two have become friends, occasionally playing

rounds together at the Medalist in Florida. Observers report that they like to needle. After Greg Norman suggested in 2012 that Woods was intimidated by McIlroy, Tiger playfully began calling Rory "The Intimidator."

"He's great with me," McIlroy says. "He's very... actually, he wants to help. He's like, 'I know you're getting into the same sort of position as me, so anything you need to know, we've been through it all.'"

### LEARNING FROM NICKLAUS

HOUGH McIlroy has used Woods' example as nearequal parts inspiration and cautionary tale, he has more actively sought the counsel of Nicklaus, who likes being a sounding board, just as Bobby Jones enjoyed imparting wisdom when Jack and his father would visit him at the Masters in the 1960s. By McIlroy's and Nicklaus' accounts, conversations have been lively on a wide range of topics. But perhaps because things change, they haven't discussed McIlroy's goals.

"Rory is good enough to achieve whatever he wants in his career, but I don't know what Rory really wants; he hasn't told me, and I haven't asked," Nicklaus says. "He may be fairly happy to go along and win one Major here, another Major there, or he may want to work really hard and win a bunch. In my career, those goals fluctuated. Every player's got to find his balance between ambition and sanity. Now, were Major championships my focus? Yes. Were they my sole focus in life? No; my family was always before that. Could I have worked harder and won more Majors? Probably. Could I have driven myself crazy doing it? Absolutely. The choices a player makes are personal, and they evolve with life. And Rory will make his."

For now, McIlroy has chosen to work hard and win often. But for how long? After he broke up with Wozniacki, he told himself to "immerse myself in golf for







a while." Could that mean his increased commitment will be short-term? "No," McIlroy answers quickly. "I've realised this program is what works for me. This is what I need to do to be my best, so I'm going to keep doing it."

One thing the program doesn't include is drastic change. Without saying so, McIlroy clearly is not following Woods' playbook. At 75kg on a 5-foot-9 frame with body fat of only 10 per cent, McIlroy says, "I'd like to put on another 6kg. That will happen over time. It would be functional. The more mass you have in the body, the more mass you can transfer into the golf ball. It's simple physics. If I was going to put any muscle on, it would be in my lower half anyway. I wouldn't want to get any bigger on top."

He's not going to change his swing. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it. That's my motto," he says. He's also careful about dramatically altering practice to focus on weaknesses like sand play (123rd on tour last year).

"You're not going to be great at everything," McIlroy says. "I think what a lot of guys do, which is understandable, is they really try to strengthen their weaknesses. And then they neglect their strengths, and even if the weaknesses get a little better, the strengths aren't as strong.

"The foundation of my game is my driving. When I drive the ball well, I win golf tournaments. So I'll always work on the driver."

McIlroy (with an assist from Watson) has returned the driver to its position as a key weapon of dominance. Though Woods played around driver inconsistency, McIlroy has harkened back to Nicklaus and Greg Norman (and the

early Woods) in the way he has combined power and accuracy as the main point of separation from his peers.

In his last tournament of 2014, the Emirates Australian Open, McIlroy was obligated to play as defending champion but was so visibly tired that even his driver didn't work very well on the way to a T-15 finish. But after seeing that Jordan Spieth had shot a closing 63 to win by six, McIlroy tweeted: You could give me another 100 rounds today at The Australian and I wouldn't sniff 63.... Well done.

"It was a very tough day to score," McIlroy says. "I just wanted people to know how good a round it was. And I like Jordan."

It's nice to be nice. Nick Faldo, who was McIlroy's first golf hero, tells a story of when a 12-year-old Rory was playing in the Faldo junior series.

"He had all the stuff you see today: an incredible full and free release of the club that gives him that very rare, true, 100 per cent strike," Faldo says. "But what most struck me was something else. At that time, my daughter Emma had just been born, and some of the kids had come over to see her and hold her. Fastforward seven years, and I see Rory for the first time again at a tournament. The first thing he says to me is, 'How's Emma?' I found that extraordinary for someone who was clearly going to be a champion. He's able to do what so many of us couldn't or didn't during our playing days: Take the blinkers off and be a whole person.

"And he still does."

It's that attribute, if McIlroy ends up winning a lot of majors as big as this year's Masters, that might make him the most complete player of all. **G** 

AUSSIE YOUNG GUN ANTONIO MURDACA

ON HOW HARD
WORK AND
"HAPPY GILMORE"
GOT HIM HOOKED
ON GOLF - AND WHY
HE HAS HIS HEART
SET ON WINNING
LOW AMATEUR
HONOURS AT

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# $\begin{array}{c} APRIL\ 12,\ 2013-_{\text{What a day!}} \\ \text{I won the Australian Boys Amateur title for the second time and} \end{array}$

I won the Australian Boys Amateur title for the second time and then watched Adam Scott sink his final putt to win the Masters. I was blown away. I could feel Scotty's elation through the TV. It was electric. From that point I wondered if that could be me one day ... but I never thought I would be playing Augusta as an amateur.



### **> > >**

AUGUSTA is an enigma to me; the reality of the Masters will not resonate until I am standing on the greens of the Augusta National Golf Club. All I have are my memories of watching the event on TV, the fondest of which are seeing Adam Scott win the green jacket and watching Tiger Woods make a few of those trademark long putts.

### $\triangleright$

SINCE my win at the 2014 Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship, which got me a start in the Masters, I have had a great support system helping me prepare: my coach Gareth Jones. Brad James and Matt Cutler of Golf Australia and my parents. I have been refining my ball shaping and distance control and had some pro tournament starts, so by the time the Masters comes around I won't be too awestruck. My support network has been with me for a long time but has really stepped up for the Masters.

### **> > >**

I COULD not imagine playing at Augusta without my parents' presence because they have been with me from day one, when I picked up plastic clubs at 2 1/2 years of age. Team Murdaca will be substantial – my uncle Joe, my best friend, coach/ caddie Matt Cutler from Golf Australia, a group of supporters from The Grange Golf Club, and six more great Americans who have supported me when I played in the US. Sadly, there are two supporters who will not be attending, Tony Mazzone and Sam Marafioti, both passed away after their battles with cancer. Everyone has been so excited for me. Over the years Grange members have said to me that they plan on being at the Masters the first time I play and, true to their word, there is a group going.



### **ANTONIO MURDACA**

AGE

**HOME CLUB** 

The Grange Golf Club CAREER-BEST ROUND 8-under (Grange West) FAVOURITE PLAYER Adam Scott

### CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

2014 Asia-Pacific Amateur champion; 2013 Australian Junior champion; 2012 Greg Norman Junior champion; member of 2012 Toyota World Junior Team champions; 2010 Australian Junior champion

### **> >**

I AM trying not to get ahead of myself. Who wouldn't want to win at the Masters? Nothing is impossible if you're in the zone. But I have my heart set on winning the low amateur title. I'll enter the tournament with a positive mindset and take it as an experience that I will never forget.

### **> > >**

THE Masters is the pinnacle of golf. I am lucky enough to be heading over in March for a few days to play Augusta. This should give me a better understanding for when I head to the Masters and play in the official practice

round. The advantage will be that I won't feel like a stranger playing the course for the first time. On the days leading up to the Masters I will also be privileged to play a practice round with Adam Scott. I have also talked to friends such as Oliver Goss and Jin Jeong, who have been previous competitors at this event, along with some caddies and coaches that know what it's all about. All their information was very useful.

### **>>**

GOLF has been the foremost influence through my life. As a toddler, after my family returned to Australia from Italy, I watched a video of "Happy Gilmore" and it looked like such fun. I couldn't wait to get some clubs and try the Happy Gilmore run-up drive. Mum and Dad bought me plastic clubs and Dad put a hole in the lawn where I spent countless hours putting. My uncle bought me some cut-down, second-hand clubs for my third birthday; gee, they were small, pretty much just a grip and a clubhead. My Dad (caddie) and uncles took me to play with them. There are no professionals in my family. I wanted to play with other kids and this was realised with the Nick McCormack Junior Golf Club. I eventually outgrew the club and looked to become a member at a private club. I couldn't do this until I was 12. But with the help of my supporters, I became a member of Adelaide Shores as a nineyear-old and my home club, The Grange Golf Club, which along with Golf Australia have continually supported me.

### **b b b**

WALKING onto the first tee during the first morning of the Masters will be one of the best moments of my life. My excitement and emotions will be tough to hide – it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me. Tackling Amen Corner for the first time with my coach on the bag will be an unforgettable moment, not just for me but also for him as we never thought we would have the opportunity to be there together.

### **> > >**

MY ADVICE for up-and-coming players is to enjoy yourself. The more you love the game the better you will play. With hard work you can accomplish your goals. Remember, in golf there are no shortcuts, just hard work. Mine is beginning to pay off.

- INTERVIEWED BY BRAD CLIFTON

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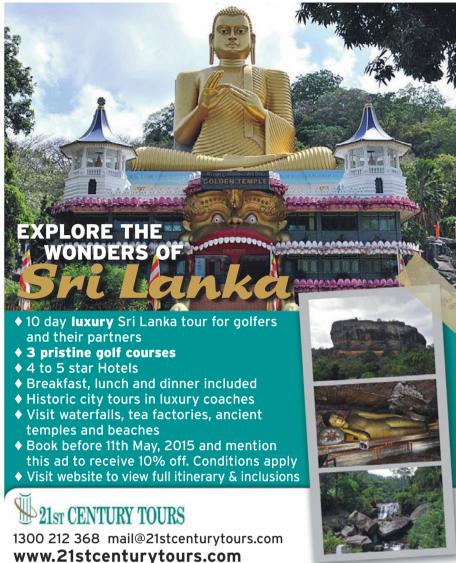


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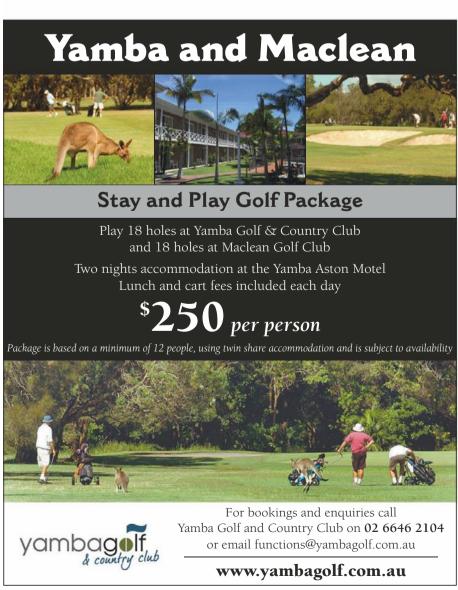
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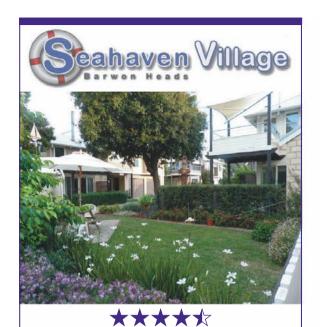


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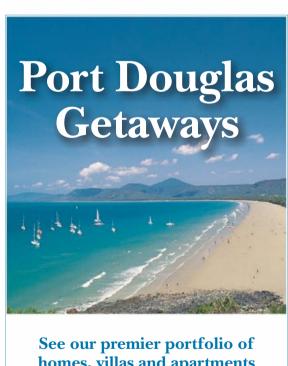
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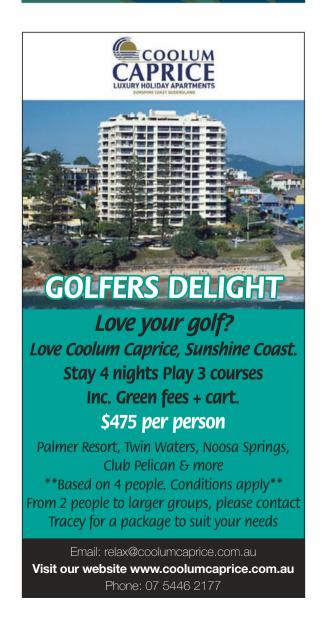


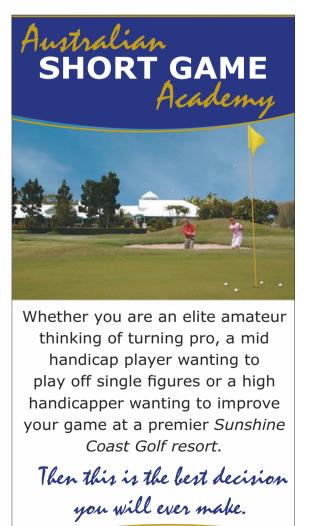


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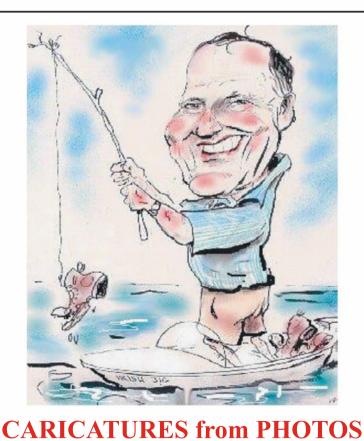




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### **►**March

### MARCH 20

US PGA TOUR: Arnold Palmer Invitational - Round 1, 5.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: Founders Cup - Round 1. 9.00am LIVE

### MARCH 21

US PGA TOUR: Arnold Palmer Invitational - Round 2, 5.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: Founders Cup - Round 2, 9.00am LIVE

### MARCH 22

US PGA TOUR: Arnold Palmer Invitational - Round 3, 4.00am LIVE LPGA TOUR: Founders Cup – Round 3, 10.00am LIVE

### MARCH 23

US PGA TOUR: Arnold Palmer Invitational – Final Round, 3.30am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: Founders Cup - Final Round, 10.00am LIVE

### MARCH 24

The Golf Show, 8.30pm



### MARCH 26

EUROPEAN TOUR: Trophee Hassan – Round 1, 10.00pm LIVE

### MARCH 27

US PGA TOUR: Texas Open - Round 1, 6.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: KIA Classic - Round 1, 9.00am LIVE

EUROPEAN TOUR: Trophee Hassan – Round 2, 10.00pm LIVE

### MARCH 28

US PGA TOUR: Texas Open - Round 1, 6.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: KIA Classic – Round 1, 9.00am LIVE

EUROPEAN TOUR: Trophee Hassan – Round 3, 11.55pm LIVE

### MARCH 29

US PGA TOUR: Texas Open - Round 3, 4.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: KIA Classic - Round 3, 9.00am LIVE

EUROPEAN TOUR: Trophee Hassan – Final Round, 11.30pm LIVE

### MARCH 30

US PGA TOUR: Texas Open - Final Round, 4.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: KIA Classic - Final Round, 9.00am LIVE

### MARCH 31

The Golf Show, 8.30pm



### **►**April

### **APRIL 3**

LPGA TOUR: ANA Inspirations – Round 1 (Part 1), 3.00am LIVE

US PGA TOUR: Houston Open - Round 1, 6.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: ANA Inspirations – Round 1 (Part 2), 9.00am LIVE

### **APRIL** 4

LPGA TOUR: ANA Inspirations – Round 2 (Part 1), 3.00am LIVE

US PGA TOUR: Houston Open - Round 2, 6.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: ANA Inspirations – Round 2 (Part 2), 9.00am LIVE

### **APRIL 5**

US PGA TOUR: Houston Open - Round 3, 4.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: ANA Inspirations – Round 3, 7.00am LIVE

### **APRIL 6**

US PGA TOUR: Houston Open - Final Round, 3.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: ANA Inspirations – Final Round, 7.00am LIVE

### **APRIL 7**

The Golf Show, 8.30pm



### **APRIL 10**

US MASTERS: Round 1, 5.00am LIVE

### **APRIL 11**

US MASTERS: Round 2, 5.00am LIVE



### **APRIL 12**

US MASTERS: Round 3, 5.00am LIVE

### **APRIL 13**

US MASTERS: Final Round, 4.00am LIVE

### **APRIL 14**

The Golf Show, 8.30pm



### **APRIL 17**

US PGA TOUR: RBC Heritage – Round 1, 5.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: LOTTE Championship – Round 1, 8.30am LIVE

EUROPEAN TOUR: Shenzhen International – Round 1, 12.30pm LIVE

### **APRIL 18**

CHAMPIONS TOUR: Greater Gwinnett – Round 1, 2.30am LIVE

US PGA TOUR: RBC Heritage – Round 2, 5.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: LOTTE Championship – Round 2, 8.30am LIVE

EUROPEAN TOUR: Shenzhen International – Round 2, 12.30pm LIVE

### **APRIL 19**

US PGA TOUR: RBC Heritage – Round 3, 4.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: LOTTE Championship – Round 3, 8.30am LIVE

CHAMPIONS TOUR: Greater Gwinnett – Round 2, 12.30pm DELAY

EUROPEAN TOUR: Shenzhen International – Round 3, 3.00pm LIVE

### **APRIL 20**

US PGA TOUR: RBC Heritage – Final Round, 4.00am LIVE

CHAMPIONS TOUR: Greater Gwinnett – Final Round, 5.00 am LIVE LPGA TOUR: LOTTE Championship – Final Round, 8.30am LIVE

EUROPEAN TOUR: Shenzhen International – Final Round, 2.30pm LIVE

### **APRIL 21**

The Golf Show, 8.30 pm



### APRIL 23

EUROPEAN TOUR: China Open – Round 1, 12.30pm LIVE

### APRIL 24

US PGA TOUR: Zurich Classic – Round 1, 5.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: Swinging Skirts - Round 1, 8.30am LIVE

**EUROPEAN TOUR:** China Open - Round 2, 12.30pm LIVE

### ADDII 25

US PGA TOUR: Zurich Classic – Round 2, 5.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: Swinging Skirts – Round 2, 8.30am LIVE

CHAMPIONS TOUR:Legends - Round 1, 12.30pm DELAY

EUROPEAN TOUR: China Open – Round 3, 3.00pm LIVE

### **APRIL 26**

US PGA TOUR: Zurich Classic - Round 3, 3.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: Swinging Skirts – Round 3, 8.30am LIVE

CHAMPIONS TOUR:Legends – Round 2, 1.00pm DELAY

EUROPEAN TOUR: China Open - Final Round, 4.00pm LIVE

### **APRIL 27**

US PGA TOUR: Zurich Classic - Final Round, 3.00am LIVE

LPGA TOUR: Swinging Skirts - Final Round, 9.00am LIVE

CHAMPIONS TOUR: Legends - Final Round, 11.30am DELAY

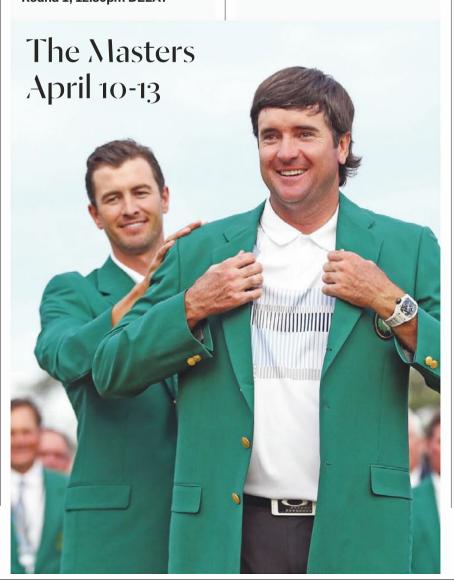
### ADDII 28

The Golf Show, 8.30pm



### **APRIL 30**

WGC: Cadillac Matchplay - Day 1, 3.00am LIVE



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kulcar.com.au

# 'EVERYONE CHOKES'

The words of Jack Nicklaus have never been more true as we watch heroes like Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy and Martin Kaymer struggle in the spotlight's heat and glare

BY JOHN HUGGAN





HOKING IS GOLF'S VERSION OF BREAKING THE SPEED LIMIT. Everyone does it, but hardly anyone ever admits it. Not Arnold Palmer after blowing a seven-shot lead with nine holes to play in the 1966 US Open. Not Greg Norman after his inexorable decline – from magnificent to mediocre to

unwatchable madness – during the 1996 Masters. Not Adam Scott after making bogey on each of the last four holes in the 2012 British Open to lose by a shot to Ernie Els. Not even Jean Van de Velde in the wake of the unforgettable aquatic triple-bogey finish that cost him the 1999 Open at Carnoustie.>>

MUCH FROM
THAT DAY. I
LEARNED WHAT
I SHOULDN'T
DO WHEN
I'M IN THAT
SITUATION
AGAIN.'
- Rory McIlroy,
on the takeaway
from his 2011
Masters collapse.

**EARNED SO** 

It's an unarguable fact: Golfers become increasingly edgy when confronted with the shrinking of a seemingly unassailable lead. The fear of failure and prospect of embarrassment make such a scenario the most stressful of all. When even naturally gifted golfers get nervous, they hit poor shots that have nothing to do with technical expertise.

They choke.

It was Jack Nicklaus who once said: "Everyone chokes. The guys who win the most handle it the best."

Which brings us to Tiger Woods, the man who, by the Golden Bear's definition, has best kept his demons at bay. But has he done so completely? Of course not. Like hackers the world over, the second-greatest player of all time gets nervous. He chokes. Indeed, since scandal engulfed his life and career in 2009, Woods hasn't been the same man. Damaged psychologically, he has never really recovered from the shame provoked by seemingly endless revelations about his private life.

Similarly, a negative effect on Woods' game has long been suspected, one that is now obvious. The shocking performance at the Phoenix Open was final confirmation

of his mental exhaustion. For years now he has bottled up a horrible truth: His golf is nowhere near the peerless standard it once was, especially his driving and short game. And now, as was clear from the number of duffs and thinned chips he perpetrated at TPC Scottsdale, he simply can't handle it anymore. He is choking.

Yet still, one last remnant of the old Tiger remains. Defiant to the end, Woods refused to publicly countenance the notion his biggest problems are mental, that he is succumbing to pressure and has the full-blown yips at both ends of the game. His explanation – release

points and all the other technical jargon – makes no real sense. That he is choking does, though.

Of course, not many are brave enough to voice agreement with Nicklaus. In the macho world of elite sport, the loss of a substantial lead can never be put down to neurological weakness. Oh

'SOMETIMES
THE TRUTH
CAN BE HARD,
BUT IF YOU
DON'T FACE
THAT TRUTH,
THEN YOU
DON'T GROW
AS MUCH AS
YOU COULD.'

- Martin Kaymer,

[below] after losing a 10-shot lead with 13 holes to play in Abu Dhabi no. Instead, a smorgasbord of excuses is invariably trotted out. Sometimes the other guy just got lucky. There might have been a nagging swing problem that eventually caught up with its owner. The putts might have been inexplicably missing. Anything to avoid the awful truth – that an inability to handle pressure was the dominant factor in losing the internal battle every golfer must win before ultimate victory can be claimed.

With that lack of recognition comes silence. Publicly at least, golf's leading lights have long been loathe to acknowledge even the remotest possibility of mental fragility. Indeed, by his regular use of the word choke, NBC commentator Johnny Miller has become something of a pariah for many US PGA Tour players. Nevermind that Miller's views come with a credibility bolstered by 25 tour victories, a brace of major-championships wins and his long-term and very public battle with the putting yips – the most visible and damaging manifestation of choking.

Not every player subscribes to such a view, though. Less than two weeks after spectacularly relinquishing a 10-shot lead with only 13 holes to play in the Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship, Martin Kaymer gave a remarkable press conference before his next competitive outing, this year's Omega Dubai Desert Classic.

At first glance, it was a transfixing

performance by the 30-year-old German, one containing a rarely seen level of honesty and self-awareness. "Within 24 hours I knew what had happened to me," Kaymer said. "I knew why certain things happened. I spoke with my father and my brother. While it's important to realise what was going wrong, you also have to talk about it. Sometimes the truth can be hard, but if you don't face that truth, then you don't grow as much as you could."

Kaymer's downfall was overconfidence. Rounds of 64-67-65 had given him a six-shot overnight lead. And when he began the final round with three birdies in four holes, he felt like "not much could go wrong." It soon did though. A bogey at the sixth was followed by a double-bogey at the ninth and, even more disastrously, a triple-bogey at the 13th. By then, the 10-shot lead was a one-shot deficit.

"How I felt on the course wasn't the person I am and not the person I want to be," Kaymer continued. "Nothing felt natural. It was an unknown situation, one I did not want to be in. What happened was one of the biggest learning days I have ever had on a golf course. Not playing-wise, but mentally. It was a life lesson."

One day later, Rory McIlroy sat in the same chair and talked about how he reacted to his implosion during the 2011 Masters.

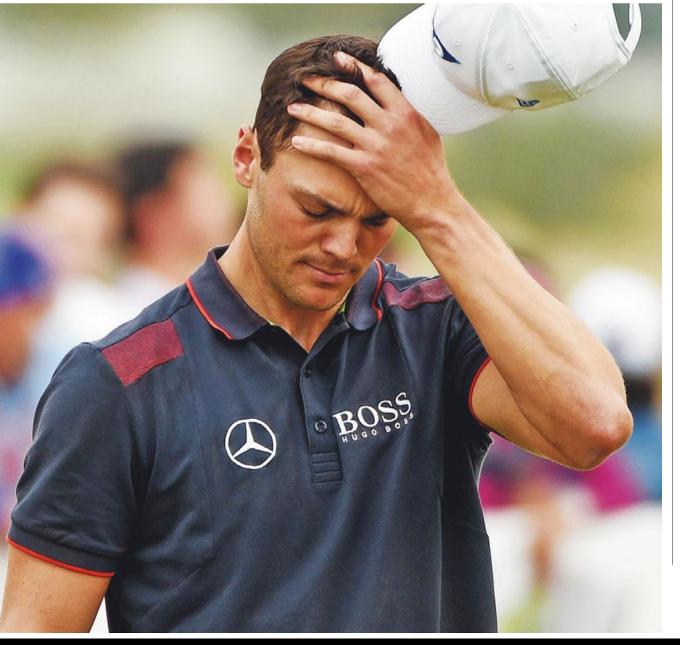
"It was the most important day of my career, bar none," he said without hesitation. 'Had I not had that happen to me, who knows where I would be today. I learned so much from that day. I learned what I shouldn't do when I'm in that situation again.

"So I know how Martin is feeling. My problem was tentativeness and defensiveness; his was overconfidence. But he had such a big lead I can see where you could get a little complacent. He'll move on and not make the same mistake again."

But will he? A doubt lingers, one Kaymer pointedly failed to mention. Unlike McIlroy, the US Open champion's game contains at least one identifiable weakness. It won't necessarily prevent him from winning more big tournaments, but it's an issue that he is partly in denial about. To not be would mean introducing the idea of choking into the conversation.

During his runaway victory at Pinehurst No.2 last June, Kaymer showed a preference for putting rather than chipping from just off those iconic Donald Ross-designed greens. At the time it was seen as a legitimate tactic. But evidence suggests that Kaymer has an issue with chip shots from bare lies. That last-round triple-bogey in Abu Dhabi was lowlighted by a badly fluffed chip from just such a spot. Which can certainly happen. But it was far from the first time Kaymer has displayed such frailty.

One last thought for those retaining doubt about the extent of choking on tour: If it isn't an issue for the professionals, why do so many employ sport psychologists? **6** 



### PUT THE SUN AT YOUR BACK, AND CHECK THESE POSITIONS

When I watch my players hit balls, I focus on how they turn. A good turn is the core of a powerful and consistent swing. I look at the neck and hips because that's the "golf skeleton". The torso should turn without much head movement, and the hips should turn within a certain space so the weight shifts to the rear foot. That sets up an explosive downswing.

Here's a great way to check these moves. Next time you see your shadow, toss down three balls to outline your hips and neck at address (you might need a friend to help). Practise swinging back and staying within that frame. When you first try this, your shadow will likely move over the back ball. The reason is, people want to crush their drives, so they try to really load up. But loading up won't help if it prevents you from getting to your front side by impact. Once you master the backswing, continue and stop at the bottom. Does your left hip cover the front ball? This is a checkpoint that many golfers don't reach, but every good player does.

So go out, grab a sleeve of balls, and put your back to the sun. Your best coach is right there in front of you.

Cheryl Anderson, one of Golf Digest's 50 Best Women's Teachers, is director of instruction at the Mike Bender Golf Academy in Florida.

### 1 SETUP

Frame your shadow using three balls: one on each hip and one at the centre of your neck.

### 2 BACKSWING

Turn to the top with your hips staying between the balls and your head moving back slightly.

### BY CHERYL ANDERSON

### 3 IMPACT

Shift your hips forward so your shadow covers the front ball, with your head remaining back.

### **COMMON FAULT**

A big lateral move might feel powerful, but you won't get to your left side in time for impact.

> NIKE shirt,

pants hat

### **Augusta Answered**



### Questions for this year's Masters

Is it still true that, as Dan Jenkins first wrote, "The Masters doesn't start until the back nine on Sunday?"

**▶ ▶**  ▶

The pressure of the green jacket and five holes with water always lent truth to that insight, but it has become less true. When Augusta was shorter and wider, going for back-nine par 5s and large stroke swings were more prevalent. Byron Nelson going birdie-eagle on the par-3 12th and par-5 13th holes in 1937 to Ralph Guldahl's double and triple turned Nelson's four-stroke deficit into a twostroke lead and began a narrative that was followed by Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus in their most memorable wins. The tournament seemed to lose some of its volatility after 420 metres were added from 2002-06 ('Tiger proofing'). Augusta responded by making the backnine par 5s more accessible on Sundays, and Charl Schwartzel (2011), Bubba Watson (2012) and Adam Scott (2013) all made extended late birdie runs on their way to victories.

2

What are Tiger Woods' chances for victory?

**▶ ▶ ▶** 

Zero if his early-season chipping problems persist or recur, or

if his latest absence from the game includes missing the tournament.

3

What would be the best story?

**▶ ▶ Þ** 

Woods somehow winning the Masters for the fifth time, his first major-championship victory since the 2008 US Open, and restarting his quest towards Nicklaus' record of 18 majorchampionship wins.

4

What would be the second-best story?

b b 1

Rory McIlroy winning his first green jacket to complete the career Grand Slam, giving him three legs of a Rory Slam and leaving no doubt that golf has entered the McIlroy Era.

5

Do left-handed players have a real advantage at the Masters?

**▶ ▶** ▶

Yes. Left-handers have won six of the past 12 Masters. Before that, no left-hander had won the tournament. The biggest reason, besides the obvious talent of three-time champion Phil Mickelson and two-time winner Bubba Watson, is the technology of the modern titanium driver has dramatically reduced the spin imparted to the ball, thus the power fade has become more advantageous than it used to be. The heavier spin on pre-titanium fades would cost a lot of distance compared to draws, but that gap has closed, and the safer fade has become the go-to shot for long hitters. At Augusta, the favoured ball flight off the tee is still right to left, the direction of a left-handed fade. Watson especially has been able to use a very long and surprisingly accurate power fade as his main advantage over the competition.

6

What's the next big alteration that should be made to the course?

**> > >** 

Remove the bentgrass on the greens and replace it with the same Champion ultradwarf Bermuda that has been installed at Pinehurst No.2. It would make the course more interesting by creating firmer greens (with almost no ball marks) that could also putt slightly slower. Better shotmaking would be rewarded, more aggressive putting would be encouraged, and more hole locations would be possible. The club's leadership position in the game would be strengthened because the prevalence of shorter second putts would speed up play, and the more environmentally friendly grass would require less water.

What is it abou

What is it about the course that allows such a mix of players of varying ages to contend?

**▶ ▶ ▶** 

Because the course has always rewarded power, aggressive younger players can go low. In 2009, Anthony Kim, then 23, made a record 11 birdies in a second round 65. Though supreme talents like Nicklaus, Woods and Seve Ballesteros were able to win the tournament at 23 or younger, youth tends to give way to experience at Augusta. In 1979, Fuzzy Zoeller became only the third player to win on

his first attempt (after Horton Smith and Gene Sarazen in the tournament's first two years). Youthful power has created plenty of excitement and some 54-hole leads (like McIlroy's illfated four-stroke edge in 2011). But in part because the Masters is always played on the same course, accumulated knowledge of efficient strategies and correct green reading play a bigger role than at other Majors.

8

What's the worst hole on the course?

**▶ ▶** ▶

To some, it's the seventh, which has been stretched to 411 metres, too long for the narrow fairway and the size of the green. It's a problem that can be solved by moving the tees up. A harder fix is the fourth. The right half of the green is much too shallow for a hole of 219m, and the hole is generally dull visually.

9

What is the best hole?

**> > >** 

It's still the 13th, even though Bubba Watson's incredible drive left him a sand wedge into this par 5 last year. Par is irrelevant: The gorgeous dogleg left is as good a hole as there is in tournament golf because the first, second and third shots so often create the opportunity for an artistic and spectacular (or disastrous) stroke.



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